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SHINDIG!

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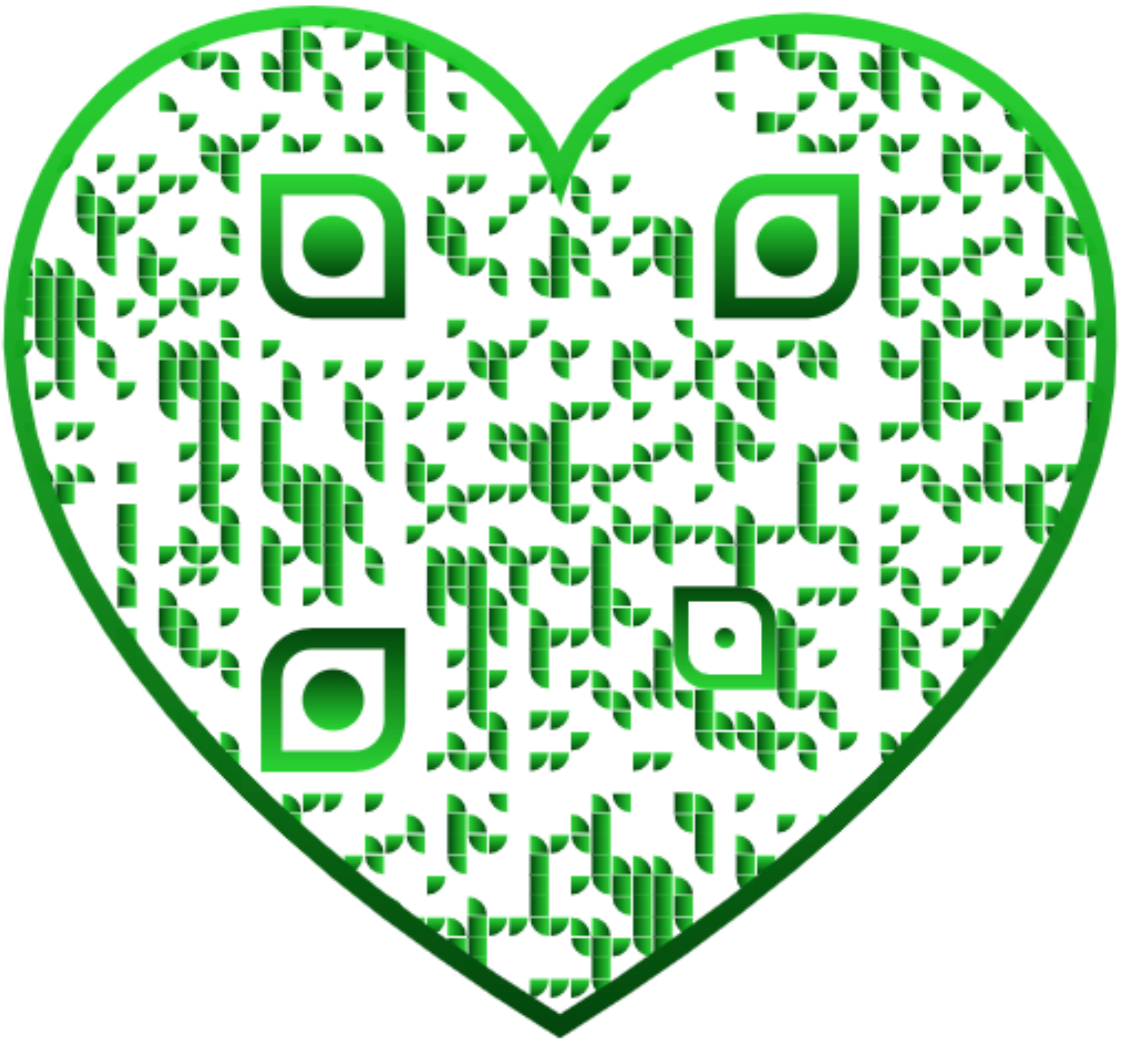

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"I really consider *No Other* a great album – I'm very proud of it. But I was very disappointed that it didn't go any further than it did"

PHOTO: © JOHN DIETRICH - FROM THE COLLECTION OF WHIN OPPICE

welcome

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Howdy Shindiggers,

Now that we've reached 151 issues, you're going to have to wait another 49 until our next major celebration. I do hope you enjoyed the stories, memories and back slapping.

This time around, we're back on *terra firma*. We called on *Nederbiet* obsessive and *Ugly Things* founder and editor Mike Stax to write about The Hague's dirtiest '60s rebels Q65, Martin Ruddock considers the impact of Gene Clark's costly 50-year-old classic *No Other,* Andy Lewis charts the rise and fall of London's biggest '90s mod hopefuls The Clique, and I pose 20 Questions to the truly unique Labi Siffre. Elsewhere, American pop maverick Kelley Stoltz, progressive folk-rock hopefuls Wally, mixed-race pop sensations Blue Mink, and the moody psychedelic textures of La Luz round things out.

I think one thing that 150 issues has taught me is not to underestimate your audience. Shindiggers like many different things, and it's our job to cover it all. From our veteran readers, who hobbled around London in stack heels, seeing all of the "head" bands; the next generation, brought up on punk, who then looked back to the previous decade; and subsequent eras of music obsessives who have traversed indie music, the garage and subsequent revival(s) to readers under the age of 30, whose musical experiences and discoveries have been informed by the easy accessibility of the digital age – have I left anyone out? – we are here to serve you all. I'll say it again, *Shindig!* should be viewed as your favourite record shop with that cool owner who suggests "If you like that, you should check this out." As those shopkeepers do, we're learning more each day and discovering new finds, picking up exciting rumours, and trying to break the odd boundary. Let's do it!

Yours,

Jon 'Mojo' Mills
Editor-In-Chief

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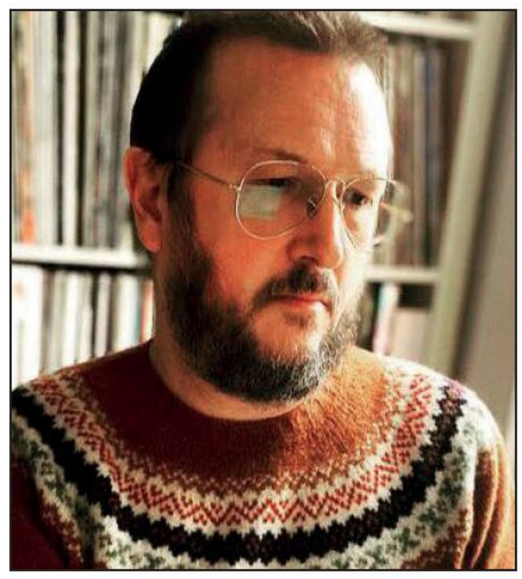

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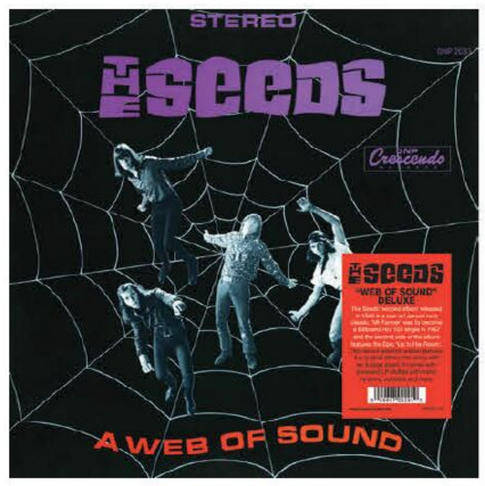
Andy Morten's former band Bronco Bullfrog's catalogue has been reissued on vinyl by Guerssen. Head here to order: guerssen.com/artist/bronco-bullfrog/

New releases: May 2024

Jackie Deshannon
Nothing Can Stop Me: Liberty Records Rarities 1960-1962
CDTOP 1643
Comprising performances of songs from the Ray Charles repertoire, this is the very belated release of what would have been the young Jackie's first album, plus 13 rare bonus Liberty masters.

Rodion G.A.
From The Archives 1981-2017
CDTOP 1646
HIQLP2 132 (2LP)
Rodion-Ladislau Rosca - the Godfather of Romanian electronic music - spent his lifetime creating music that was ambitious, ground-breaking and innovative. This new collection of material recorded between 1981 and 2017 is taken from his personal archive.

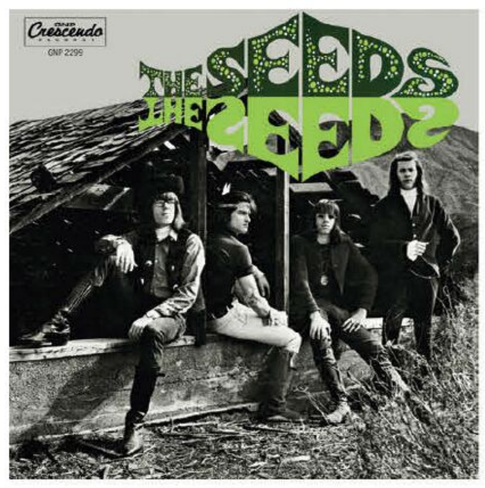


The Seeds
A Web Of Sound
HIQLP2 135 (2LP)
The Seeds' second album released in 1966 is a pop-art garage rock classic. 'Mr Farmer' was to become a Billboard Hot 100 single in 1967 and the second side of the album features the 14-minute epic 'Up In Her Room'. This deluxe gatefold edition features the original stereo mix along with an 8-page insert and a second LP stuffed with mono versions, outtakes and more.

A Different World:
The Holland-Dozier-Holland Songbook
CDTOP 520
The Motor City's flagship songwriting trio of the 60s and two dozen of their greatest achievements.

Motörhead
Motörhead
WIKC 2 (MC)
Motörhead's debut album is a stone-cold classic. The album has literally not been out of print on vinyl since Ace first released it back in 1977. We are delighted to release it here on cassette.

FROM THE VAULTS:

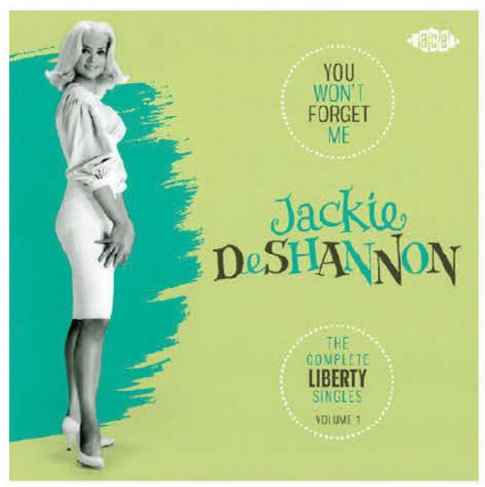


The Seeds
The Seeds
HIQLP2 129 2LP
Originally released in 1966, "The Seeds" is an essential garage punk album. This deluxe edition of "The Seeds" features the original album in mono, a bonus LP of outtakes and booklet packed with sensational photos and memorabilia.

COMING SOON:

Shrine Records
Rare Soul Sides: Washington DC 1965-1967
LTDBOX 021
Release date: 31.05.2024
Set up by Eddie Singleton with Berry Gordy's ex-wife and co-founder of Motown, Raynoma (Miss Ray) in 1964, the Shrine label, based in Washington DC, has been a buzzword for collectors for over fifty years. Here we present seven new Shrine 45s in a box set, with a fully illustrated booklet packed with rare photos. Soul heaven!

Jon Savage's The Secret Public
How The LGBTQ+ Aesthetic Shaped Pop Culture 1955-1979
CDTOP2 1647
Release date: 31.05.2024
Homosexuality has been a part of post-war popular music since its very inception. This compilation begins in late 1955, with the extraordinary success of Little Richard; continues through early-1960s pop and pop art; 1960's Tamla and Soul, Glam Rock, the early 70's funk and disco that was played in the underground New York clubs, and then moves on to the omnipresence of that gay-derived style, Disco, in the late seventies.



You Won't Forget Me:
The Complete Liberty Singles Vol 1
CDCHD 1243
Spanning 1960-1963, the A and B sides of Jackie's first dozen Liberty singles, all in their authentic mono mixes. Includes the original versions of 'Needles And Pins' and 'When You Walk In The Room'.

thoughts&words

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A SMALL OASIS

Congratulations on your 150th issue Jon,

I love *Shindig!* Magazine! I don't think in my 59 years of life there's been a magazine that has given me so much joy. If *Shindig!* should disappear (God forbid) it would feel like losing a close friend. What is that special magic that makes the magazine so outstanding? Well, of course, it's about the music I have listened to since I was a teenager (and even earlier.) Music is the artform that lifts my spirit, makes me feel young, elated, exited or wistfully melancholic – it directly hits the emotions. I'm in love with the varied music and youth cultures of the '60s and '70s and *Shindig!* covers all that. There is something about those two decades, a time when mass youth culture exploded, and it is beyond nostalgia. You cover music to from the '80s and '90s, (let's see more of this) produced by people who also loved this brief but wonderful time in popular culture, but who also added something new resonating with their generation, and present-day acts that do likewise. The look of the magazine – brightly coloured '60s design is wonderful and eye-catching, you do not want to chuck it in the recycle bin once read (like you do with *MOJO*, *Uncut*, etc) Above all I think it offers a small oasis, the personal touch, in an increasingly corporatised but scary chaotic world, a means of escape but also enlightenment.

My musical tastes are very varied like *Shindig!* itself, beginning not with mod, but with scruffy NWOBHM, Motorhead and AC/DC. But I was different from my headbanger schoolmates because I watched and was inspired by the *Woodstock* film and Cream at the Albert Hall (all shown on TV in the early '80s). I was into (still am) Hawkwind, Steve Hillage and a few song-based prog bands too.

In 1985 I had a sort of epiphany when the *Whistle Test* featured The Paisley Underground scene. I bought two LPs on the back of this – Rain Parade's *Emergency Third Rail Power Trip* and Green On Red's *Gas, Food, Lodging* (and The Fuzztones' *Lysergic Emanations* and Barracudas' *Drop Out*) and I didn't look back, immersing myself into all the genres of music of the late '60s, represented on those albums. Later on, I got into acid-folk, hauntology based electronica, sunshine-pop and psychedelic soul/funk.

Where I might differ from *Shindig!* is my interest in US post-hardcore, shoegaze, heavy-drone psych, doom/stoner metal and left-field *avant*-rock, but even here your magazine occasionally dips its toe.

Finally, what would I like to see in future issues? How about a major article, even an interview, (although it's maybe not possible as she is very reclusive these days), on one of the greats of rock 'n' roll, Poison Ivy of The Cramps, with her on the front cover. Articles on Galaxie 500 and Japanese proponents of mind-blowing heavy-psych improvisation, Acid Mothers Temple, would go down nicely. Also more features on *Shindig!*-friendly musical genres and sub-genres with recommended albums/singles, which are available to purchase at a fair price and on the culture and scenes of the '60s and '70s in general.

All the best for the future,

George Mathews

You've practically summed up what I was hinting at in my editorial. Thanks George.
We're an eclectic bunch.

STAR LETTER

Let's hear it for Honeybus

STELLAR RECOMMENDATIONS

Hi Jon and all,

Firstly, congratulations to you for reaching that special milestone, issue #150 was a corker! Personally, it ramped up the excitement on the forthcoming Twigs album and I learned loads about The Animals that I didn't know.

Considering you were, briefly, looking back on your musical and written successes and achievements, I'll do the same on what they've given me. For one, a weakened bank balance due to the number of stellar recommendations; Honeybus, Bananagun, Mapache, Marina Allen, Sylvie to name a few. But that's not a complaint!

Also, your magazine has resulted in a need to check out loads more music I would never have known about otherwise, so thanks for that. I've always thought that great music writing should make the reader want to seek out the subject and your people have done that in spades.

Keep on keeping on and we'll all hopefully be around for the next 150!
All the best,

Chris Donegan

Thanks Chris. That we lead to people's enjoyment doing what we love most is beyond fulfilling. And that we have supported The Lemon Twigs since day one, has been a blast. Hope you enjoy the fab debut album from Caldwell, care of Popclaw. I'm sure you will.

SOUNDS THAT SWING

Hi Jon,

The first time I saw your mag was in a small record shop in Camden back in 2011. The wall was full of them. I bought them all and went back to Sweden. I'm glad. I've been with you ever since.

Thanks,

Lars Andersson

I'm glad you found us Lars. You're a great supporter.

TANTRIC OBSTACLES

Hi Jon,

I can't believe it's been 30 years; I came in at issue eight, many moons ago, and haven't missed a single issue yet. The magazine just gets better. I've been turned on to a lot of great music through your it, particularly the reviews section. I am currently listening to the *Shindig!* Broadcast, which is a great addition to reading the mag. As is your website.

How about an article on Megadog and the psychedelic rave scene of the '90s? Some great bands were active on the scene, such as Astralasia, Eat Static, and Ozric Tentacles, who I have recently seen and are still a force to be reckoned with.

Thanks for your hard work in bringing the mag to us. Here's to many more issues.

Yours,

Richard Mark Booker

Thanks "Pretty Boy Merl", you too are an amazing supporter of all we do. We did touch on the Ozrics in our feature on New Age Travellers in issue #128, but there has been talk of more. Watch this space.

ORIGINAL ARTY FACTS

Hi Jon,

A great issue to celebrate 30 years.

However, Kris Needs was very remiss, if not negligent, in his list of fanzines in not mentioning the two that emanated from Scotland.

The wonderful Brian Hogg's *Bam Balam* that ran to 14 issues from 1975 to '82 and contained meticulously researched discographies was a boon in the pre-internet years to those of us trying to find out more about the bands we had discovered on the original *Nuggets* album. Equally good was Bert Muirhead's *Hot Wacks*, which ran to 23 issues from '74 to '83 and mined the same territory as *ZigZag* but did have special issues devoted to particular artists – ones on Spirit and Jan & Dean were very informative.

Keep up the good work.

Best Wishes,

Pat Curran

Thanks Pat, Kris covered a lot of ground and knew he'd miss some. Yes, utterly essentially. You're right. Brian Hogg was a massive influence.

ROOTS

Hi Jon,

Another excellent issue. Congrats for those years at the helm.

I was slightly disappointed that in the feature on other music mags back then, the only folk titles included were both American. There were lots of good British ones – including a certain one which began in 1979 and ran for 40 years with the same editor (and the proud boast of publishing every single issue on time, all 425 of them!). Ahem!

Best,

Ian A Anderson

Ah, as previously. Kris knew he'd miss some. And he did. Your magazine trailblazed indie publishing in the UK. Folk Roots, *Ian, was absolutely one of our forebears. Sorry for missing.*

THE BALLAD OF CHERRY FLAVAR

Hi Jon,

Having bought Big Star's first album a few months ago, I really enjoyed the recent cover story, especially as I don't know that much about the group. An excellent article.

Can you please advise if *Shindig!* have ever done a feature on '60s/70s Scottish pop group Marmalade as if you have, I'll see if I can find a back issue.

Regards,

Gordon Barclay

So pleased your enjoyed the Big Star story. What a band. Marmalade have been on our list of groups to cover for a long time. It's on the cards.

THE STREET GIVETH

Hey Jon,

It was great to see Cat Mother in the press again, particularly from the UK.

I once found a letter from sci-fi writer Richard Lupoff chiding a reviewer of *Silver Pistol* in *Phonograph Record Magazine* for including Cat Mother in the British West Coast country set. All because of UA, of course.

Unfortunately, I did notice that there was no mention of drummer Michael Equine, still hanging in there on the Mendocino Coast at age 82. Also, it would've been nice to tie Jay Ungar to his Ashokan Music Camps, one of the best legacies of Cat Mother.

There is now a Cat Mother Scrapbook available to clarify some historical inaccuracies. Go to catmotherscrapbook.com.

Keep up the good work,

Phil Hildenbrand

Thanks Phil. Such a great band. They really deserve for us to tell the whole story one day.

SOFT LOWLAND TONGUE

Hi Jon,

I saw the reference to a request for a Man article and wonder whether there was any scope to include an article regarding Deke's writing career? I could suggest you contact Michael Heatley who published his four tomes who may well be able to give some hitherto less-known aspects to Deke's writing career which managed to convey his wit and humour as well as weaving a good tale. His book on the guitarists (*The Twang Dynasty*) he had admired carried a moving tribute to his sparring partner in MAN of many years.

LISTEN TO SHINDIG! ON SOHO RADIO

Soho Radio

From that strand I then wondered if there was any scope to see if Dave Charles could recap his life as drummer with the Helps, his tenure as an engineer/producer at Rockfield and being Dave Edmunds drummer post Rockpile.

Last strand, Jeff Penczak's review of Jackie Leven's John St. Field's *Control* got me agreeing with the final comment – "criminally underrated performer". Leven's solo canon was prolific and upheld a high level of quality. I first saw him playing a set at the first Man Convention in Hounslow, he had a full band behind him and played material that surfaced on *The Meaning Of Love Is Greater Than The Mystery Of Death*. From there I saw him a good many times as a solo artist or with James Hallawell or Michael Cosgrave. The marvellous quip when asked for an encore – "You wouldn't ask Picasso for another brushstroke" – although once after a gig in Winchester Jackie was whistling in the loos and someone asked if that was an encore – much jocularity ensued. There used to be a fanzine, *The Haunted Valley* – edited by Mick Nolan, not sure if he is still around to offer any insights into the man. I also attended a Doll By Doll reunion gig at The Borderline as part of the Core Trust fundraising – they were still mighty and powerful – as well as Jackie being "criminally underrated" Jo Shaw's guitar playing was a great part of DbD. So any chance of a lengthy retro Leven /Doll By Doll piece?

As my late mother was wont to say, "I've said my piece".

Cheers,

Richard Gould

There're definitely some interesting strands to explore Richard. Great music, one and all.

CATCH *IT* IF YOU CAN

HI Jon,

I was interested to read the book review on the new Peter Checksfield publication about The Dave Clark Five, in the latest *Shindig!* magazine. As a great fan of the group in my schooldays, I tried ordering it, but no doubt you already know, it has been unpublished. I wonder why!!

Great magazine as always, this month, particularly The Animals piece.

Keep up the great work.

Graham Coxall

Yes, Dave had it withdrawn. A shame.

LOTHARIO IN A

Hello Jon,

I was interested to read Clive Webb's article on Michael Nesmith's productions. I'm a big fan of the Countryside band Nesmith put together and I have spent some time and effort tracking down the records released on the short-lived label.

As well as the albums by Red Rhodes and Garland Frady there are two singles by Tom Holbrook, two by Garland Frady, one by J G O'Rafferty and one by Steve Fromholz. The promos have versions of the same song in stereo and mono while stock copies have two different songs.

I do have a stock copy of the J G O'Rafferty single but have been unable to track down a stock copy of the Fromholz one. Apparently, an acetate exists of an album of the Fromholz recordings but it has not surfaced on the web to my knowledge.

I have a promo folder with information on the label together with photos of Garland Frady, J G O'Rafferty and Tommy Brooks. Sadly, the latter didn't get to release anything before the label was shut down. Perhaps David Geffen will reactivate it if we all send him a fiver?

Regards

Clive Jones

Let's get a cheque in the post.

SHINDIG!

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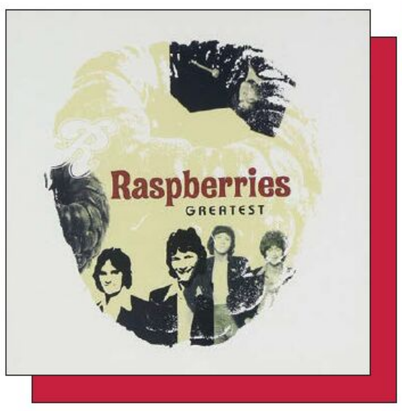
shindiggin'

What's HOT on the Shindig! turntable

The brand new releases, compilation standouts, old album tracks and dusty 45s rockin' our world this month

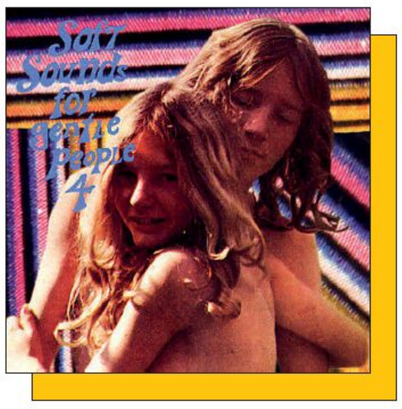


RASPBERRIES

Overnight Sensation (Hit Record)

To the average British Joe, Eric Carmen was a two-hit wonder with power ballad 'All By Myself' and *Dirty Dancing*'s 'Hungry Eyes' to his name. Surprising then that his passing elicited lengthy obits from the broadsheets; even more so that none acknowledged his masterpiece, Raspberries' swansong 'Overnight Sensation (Hit Record)'. This effectively served as the bridge between the powerpop group days and his solo big balladry, and what *Shindig!* reader doesn't cherish that instant the band stops playing, only for the song to reappear on a transistor radio? One of pop's most sublime moments, surely.

Available on: Raspberries Greatest (CAPITOL LP)

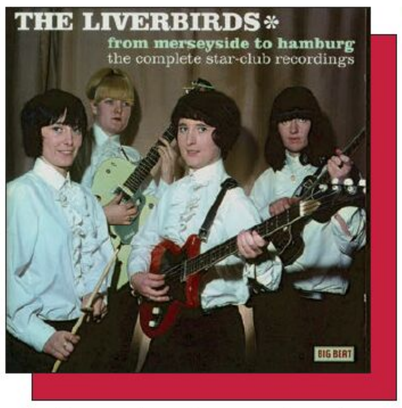


MARK ERICKSON & THE POINT DUME BOYS

Hey, In The Water

Mark Malmborg AKA Erickson AKA Eric's sole album, 1969's *A Midsummer's Day Dream*, is currently enjoying something of a reappraisal following Now Sounds' vinyl remaster. Often optimistically compared to The Beach Boys' late '60s golden era, it nevertheless demands the attention of sunshine-pop fetishists. The album sold next to nothing, and the following year Malmborg released the superb, tropically warm 'Hey, In The Water' single on his own Cove label before bowing out with '71's promo-only 'Drinkin' Again Over You'.

Available on: Soft Sounds For Gentle People 4 (PET CD)

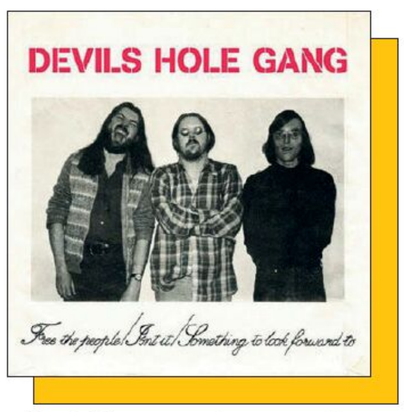


THE LIVERBIRDS

He's Something Else

The recent publication of The Liverbirds' story penned by surviving members Mary McGlory and Sylvia Saunders prompted an in-depth dive into their '60s recordings. This version of Rick Shorter's R&B belter is brim-full of youthful energy and features call-and-response vocals and guitar licks that'd give George Harrison a run for his money. A track that encapsulates the infectious optimism of the original beat boom, and hints at the jangly folk-rock that would follow. What a joy it must have been to have heard this played live during Hamburg's thriving club scene years.

Available on: From Merseyside To Hamburg: The Complete Star-Club Recordings (BIG BEAT CD)



DEVILS HOLE GANG

Something To Look Forward To

This one is a bit of a riot! From London circa 1978-79 this obscure outfit cut one rare three-track 7" for the Slow Burning Fuse label. Long-haired beard-oh's that looked more like grungesters from the future than punks, but the sound, in the main – and on this, their best track by a country mile – features vocals more suited to a Johnny Moped or UK Subs record, whilst the lead guitar could've originated from some Vertigo label proggers. Great affordable reissue from new German label.

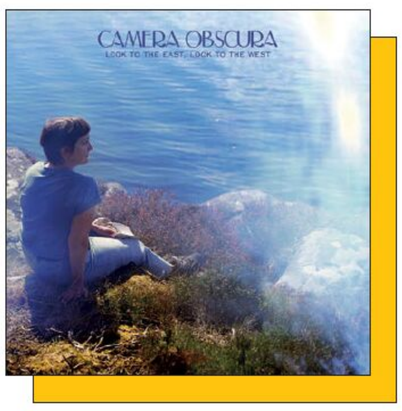
Available on: Free The People (TAX SCAM EP)

AHMED MALEK

La Silence Des Cendres

Many would be unaware of "Algeria's answer to Ennio Morricone" were it not for the work of the renowned Habibi Funk label in bringing his music to a wider audience via the 2016 compilation *Musique Originale De Films*. This previously unreleased and subtlely funky gem shares common DNA with some of the great maestros of Italian movie music but is sprinkled with enough eastern exotica to make it beautifully unique in its sound and execution.

Available on: Musique Originale De Films (HABIBI FUNK LP)

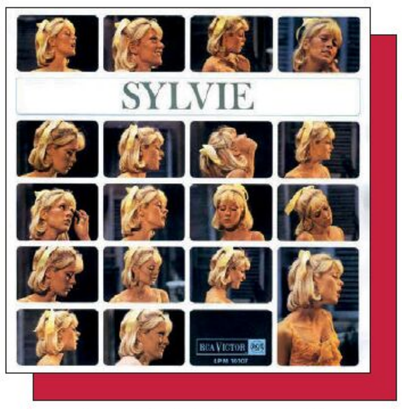


CAMERA OBSCURA

Sugar Almond

Scotland's finest purveyors of pure pop return from a decade-long hiatus following keyboardist Carey Lander's untimely death in 2015. Traceyanne Campbell's songwriting has never been stronger while newest member Donna Maciocia's keyboard undertones and subtle synth solos are more prominent, perhaps acknowledging Lander's absence while simultaneously welcoming new challenges. 'Sugar Almond', a heart-breaking love song-cum eulogy featuring Campbell's tearful goodbye accompanied only by Maciocia's delicate piano tinkling is dedicated to Lander and her "rabbity eyes / Sugar-coated almonds as grey as Glasgow skies."

Available on: Look To The East, Look To The West (MERGE LP)

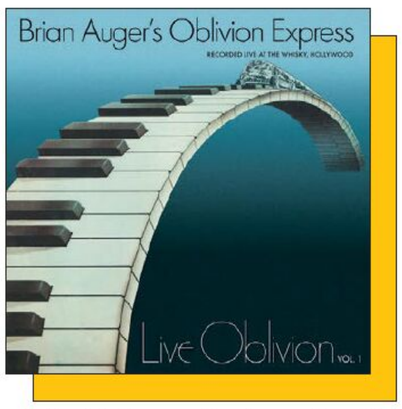


SYLVIE VARTAN

Il Faut Trouver Son Coin De Ciel (Beyond The Rising Sun)

To the newly christened Marc Bolan's undoubted bewilderment, his 1965 debut 45 'The Wizard' jangled scant cash registers. However, he received an unexpected boost the following year when Sylvie Vartan, then one of France's top stars, recorded a *yé-yé* version of flipside 'Beyond The Rising Sun'. Brother Eddie's arrangement brought a lushness missing from Mike Leander's stirring original, and Sylvie's crystalline vocal lent the song a previously unknown sophistication. Years before anyone else, the Vartans recognised that the London kid had promise.

Available on: Sylvie (RCA VICTOR LP)



BRIAN AUGER'S OBLIVION EXPRESS

Bumpin' On Sunset

Brian Auger is synonymous with this enduring Wes Montgomery classic. Originally appearing on Brian Auger & The Trinity's 1968 studio album *Definitely What!* 'Bumpin' On Sunset' also surfaced the following year as a 45 before an extended reworking appeared on The Oblivion Express's '74 long-player *Straight Ahead.* A fixture of Auger's live shows across the decades, the cool and measured vibe of this 1974 recording from The Whisky A Go-Go affords them ample space to showcase their manifest talents on this most hypnotic and profoundly soulful of grooves.

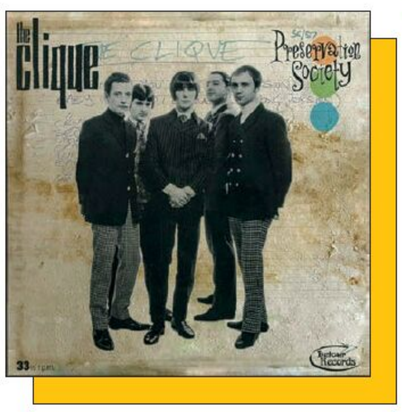
Available on: Live Oblivion Vol 1 (SOUL BANK LP)

HOLLYWOOD STARS

Taxi Driver

This has got to be a record, and we don't mean the shiny black plastic variety. Hollywood Stars, Kim Fowley's west coast response to New York Dolls, are releasing their first studio album in – wait for it – 47 years! *Starstruck* will be along shortly, but meanwhile here's 'Taxi Driver'. After some glam sleight of hand, it scoots into '70s powerpop territory, with vocals and guitars vying to out-hook each other and verses falling into the chorus. Where the hell do these guys get off sounding so youthful and exuberant?

Available on: BANDCAMP



THE CLIQUE

After Five

The Clique were massive on the Euro mod scene. They also endured more line-up changes than most over their relatively short career. In 1998 all previous members reconvened one last time to record a three-track EP at London's legendary Toe Rag Studio. 'After Five', penned by drummer Matthew Braim, features a sterling vocal from Chris Jordan and beautiful guitar textures courtesy of Bruce Brand, recalling the sort of mid-tempo, soulful pop that would have been a smash in '66.

Find it on: Preservation Society (DETOUR BOX SET)

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The Numero Group has been very kind in offering not just one, but two excellent vinyl box sets for a lucky reader to receive. **ANDWELLA**'s ***To Dream*** contains the band's 1969 psych-rock debut *Love & Poetry* (released under the name Andwella's Dream) and two follow-ups issued over the next two years (with the second, *World's End*, featuring the danceable, Stones-ish 'Hold Onto Your Mind', which became a floor filler on the early disco scene).

Jazz and pop singer **MARGO GURYAN** only released the sublime *Take A Picture* album in '68, but her cult grew and grew in the 21st century, with various demos and unreleased recordings emerging. ***Words & Music*** gathers the singer/songwriter's entire recorded legacy across three albums.

Both box sets come with fantastic books filled with pictures and biographical information. Oh yes, we're also throwing in a rather nifty **LA BABE** ringer t-shirt, as worn by Ned Doheny

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Home is where the sunlight is. La Luz, L-R: Maryam Qudus, Audrey Johnson, Shana Cleveland, Lee Johnson
PHOTO: GINGER FIERSTEIN

Remain In Light

Written by Shana Cleveland on the back of a cancer diagnosis, **LA LUZ**'s new album *News Of The Universe* is centred around "love" and "beauty".

CAMILLA AISA hears about fear, loneliness and the overriding power of music

"The last couple of years blew my heart and mind wide open," La Luz lynchpin Shana Cleveland candidly tells *Shindig!* Some months before she started penning songs for the band's latest album, she was diagnosed with cancer. "I was laid so low by fear and depression that I had to really examine my relationship with everything. I spent a lot of time thinking about death, which caused me to also think about how I wanted to live, and the biggest takeaway was that I wanted to live in a state of love as much as possible. I wanted to let go of fear and judgment whenever possible and leave myself more open to beauty." *News Of The Universe* offers not only moments of sonic beauty, but guidance in finding beauty wherever you look – it's a record that balances the acknowledgment of a heavily imbalanced, frightening present with a desire to seek something "beyond", to find true bliss in the midst of chaos. "To feel wide-eyed and grounded on the earth but free from attachment, that's the sweet spot," offers Cleveland. It's a challenging dichotomy, the dark of the here-and-now, reflected with clarity in the lyrics, and the light of the out-there, conjured by the psychedelic tension of the music. After all, a similar dualism is offered by the natural world, which is perhaps the album's most eminent presence. Nature was what really prompted Cleveland to move to California. "You can hang out outside all year round. I love to sit outside and let all the weird sounds of nature travel through my consciousness while I write," she enthuses. She then reflects on the flowers, trees and sunbeams-heavy imagery that features so prominently on *News Of The Universe*. "There are references to how our own mortality is mirrored in nature. Dandelions turning from suns to moons, the summer scorching through a green meadow and turning it to gold, a line in the title track, 'over the hills and under the ground

“One big inspiration was Yanti Bersaudara, a group of Indonesian sisters who released some amazing recordings in the ’60s and early ’70s. They have so many great songs chock-full of heavenly harmonies and very sick instrumentation. Great guitar tones”

we follow the setting sun’… But there is also the great undeniable optimism of the first wildflowers popping out in spring.”

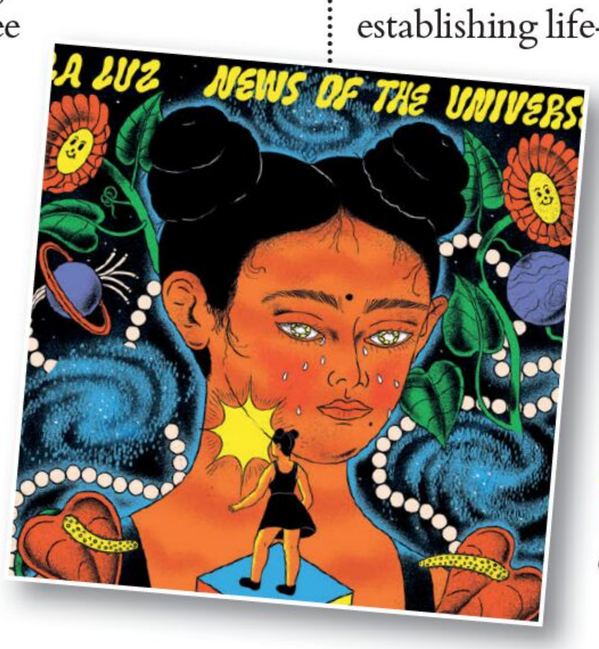
News Of The Universe feels in constant search of hopefulness, of ways to survive the strange world the record’s cathartically trippy title track surveys. Connection is one of them. “When I was diagnosed with cancer, the overwhelming feeling I had was just loneliness,” Cleveland looks back. “I felt like I had been sucked out of the world and away from the people around me who were just going about their normal lives while I was in crisis mode. I’ve always been a lonely girl and I’ve written a lot of songs about loneliness, but this experience was so intensely isolating that I knew I wanted to approach writing about it with as much vulnerability and openness as possible in the hopes that it if these songs reach people who are struggling, they would offer comfort and the listener would feel less alone.”

La Luz’s new album comes only a year after Cleveland’s much acclaimed solo outing *Manzanita*. She enjoys the back and forth of her band and solo projects, spending a month or so writing a record in full La Luz mode and then, once there is a break from touring, switching gears and dedicating herself to solitary creation. “I like this routine because I always feel excited about what I’m working on,” she points out. “It always feels fresh and new when I come back to the electric guitar after being away in acoustic land for a while. The energy of the two projects feels very different and the dance between them keeps me balanced.”

Shortly after the *News Of The Universe* recording sessions, keyboardist Alice Sandahl and bassist Lena Simon parted ways with La Luz. “It is a bit bittersweet listening to some of these songs and thinking that we won’t get to play them together live,” says Cleveland. Still, she sounds excited about hitting the road with a new live line-up, which includes returning drummer Audrey Johnson as well as the freshly recruited Maryam Qudus (*News Of The Universe* producer) on keys and Lee Johnson on bass. “I love this band and feel very protective of it in some ways and I feel like the vibes within the band now are better than ever,” she reassures.

La Luz’s latest album takes its title from a collection of nature and spiritual poems that had been on Cleveland’s shelf for years. “I finally started reading it shortly after my diagnosis when other media like the daily news and social media felt emotionally impossible to take in. There’s something uniquely soul crushing about feeling your world fall apart all around you and then scrolling Instagram. But when you turn your gaze to nature you get the whole picture: the beauty and the decay, the irrefutable cycle of life and death, the mystery of the cosmos in a field of weeds.” Crucial as they are, nature and poetry are but two of the album’s wide-ranging sources of inspiration. “Buddhism is a big influence,” Cleveland reveals. “Movies. I love *cinéma vérité*, French New Wave, Fellini, Jodorowsky, bizarre and supernatural horror like *Hausu*. Surrealist and hyper-realist comics.” In similar fashion, the musical references are properly genre-bending, ranging from Broadcast to Black Sabbath to Blonde Redhead’s *Melody Of Certain Damaged Lemons*. “One big inspiration was Yanti Bersaudara, a group of Indonesian sisters who released some amazing recordings in the ’60s and early ’70s. This band has been a big influence on La Luz for years but I’m not sure I’ve ever talked about it. They have so many great songs chock-full of heavenly harmonies and very sick instrumentation. Great guitar tones.”

Whether it’s about acknowledging distant-on-paper favourites, finding familiar truths in the cycle of nature or establishing life-affirming connections, *News Of The Universe* seems to come with a chief lesson: everything is interconnected. “There’s a comfort in that, in looking outside yourself and seeing yourself reflected in everything and everything reflected in you.”



News Of The Universe is out on 24th May on Sub Pop

it's a happening thing

In The Blue Hour

UNCLE ACID & THE DEADBEATS' mission to alchemise early '70s sludge-metal and Euro horror exploitation film soundtracks reaches a zenith on their sixth album and first for six years, *Nell' Ora Blu*.

We asked Uncle Acid AKA **KEVIN STARRS** to sacrifice 10 long-players that fed into its creation

ALESSANDRO ALESSANDRONI

La Terrificante Notte Del Demonio (Devil's Nightmare) OST

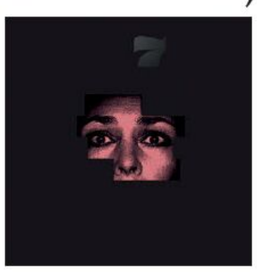
(Cinedelic LP, 2017, recorded 1971)

The film is a pretty standard gothic castle horror, but the score is cool. There's some nice harpsichord stuff on this along with heavily filtered analogue synths. Alessandroni worked with Morricone on a lot of his classic soundtracks and was a pioneer of that twangy, reverb-drenched spaghetti western sound. He inspired me to use a Strat on some of the new album which I wouldn't normally use. There's an unused track called 'Dog Whistle' on which I did some whistling, again something inspired by Alessandro.

FABIO FRIZZI / FRANCO BIXIO / VINCE TEMPERA

Sette Note In Nero OST

(Death Waltz/Mondo/Cinevox LP, 2020, recorded 1977)

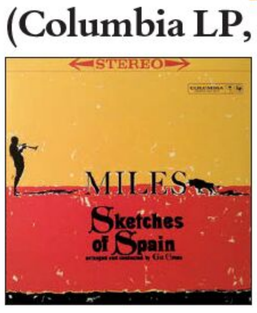


The title track is just incredible, built around seven notes as the name suggests. Really creepy and just a heavy vibe all round. I love the way it builds up – once the low synth kicks in, it sounds like the gates of hell opening up. There's a nice variety of synthetic and acoustic instruments on this album, something I wanted to make sure I had on our record. It would be too easy to just do a synthesiser album but having that mix of styles and instruments makes it more interesting to listen to.

MILES DAVIS

Sketches Of Spain

(Columbia LP, 1960)



He's a good gateway artist for people getting into jazz. I prefer the slower piano jazz to some of the mad trumpet stuff but this record is just fantastic. I wanted a specific type of trumpet playing on our track 'Il Gatto Morto' but without being able to play the instrument or read music, I couldn't explain it in technical terms. When I found the right player, I made him listen to this record all the way through before he recorded anything. I told him to imagine playing that style in a sleazy Rome nightclub, then got him to do a take of improvising. He nailed it in one go and the take is in the song.

GOBLIN

Suspiria OST

(Cinevox LP, 1977)

Bit of an obvious one maybe, but just a brilliant soundtrack. I love all that whispering plus their use of more unusual instruments like the waterphone and tabla. On the new record I used a Greek instrument called a tzoura, which is related to the bouzouki that Goblin used. I lived in Crete for a few years when I was younger, so I was used to hearing all these weird stringed instruments up in the hills and villages. Goblin were the masters of '70s soundtracks so I didn't really want to reference their sound too much. However, you can't deny an influence when it comes through naturally.

NORA ORLANDI

The Strange Vice Of Mrs Wardh OST

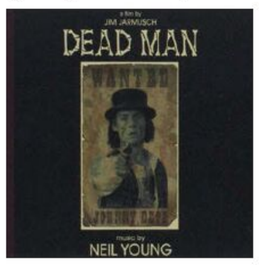
(Cinedelic LP, 2001 recorded 1971)

The amazing 'Dies Irae' is the obvious highlight on this soundtrack. Tarantino also used it in one of his movies but hearing it in its original context works better. Orlandi is a great composer and I love her wordless vocalising. There's a nice variety of distorted guitar, Hammond organ, jazz rhythms and a sort of Euro lounge-music vibe on this score. That easy-listening style appears quite often in *giallo* – it lulls you into a false sense of calm before things turn sour.

NEIL YOUNG

Dead Man

(Vapor LP, 1996)



He's just been the best for longer than anyone else I can think of. This is a great mix of acoustic and electric guitars, pump organ and tack piano all with spoken word from the film. I used Neil's set-up of a '53 Goldtop, '58 Tweed Deluxe and mid-70s Echoplex tape delay on the track 'Nell' Ora Blu'. That track was inspired by the vibe of *Dead Man*. I bought the Echoplex from an auction of Neil's old equipment, so I'd like to think the tape has memories of his playing baked into it. I met Neil once and it was the most psychedelic moment of my life. His eyes were like black mirrors. I looked inside and I saw flashes of his entire career burning across them, like looking through the eyes of time itself. His stare got so intense that I started seeing double. I kept it together pretty well though and had a fairly normal conversation with him.

DAVID CROSBY

If I Could Only Remember My Name

(Atlantic LP, 1971)

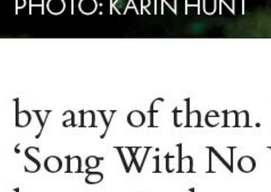
I love Croz. When I first discovered CSNY via *4 Way Street*, I was immediately drawn to the Crosby material. I was obsessed with his songs and this was the first solo record I bought

"There's a nice variety of synthetic and acoustic instruments on this album, something I wanted to make sure I had on our record"

Uncle Acid & The Deadbeats with Kevin Starrs, second left
PHOTO: KARIN HUNT

by any of them. It's got a real hazy feel to it. 'Song With No Words', with its harmonised, wordless vocals, was a big influence. 'What Are There Names' is just incredible. There's a kind of mild vigilante threat to that song that I love, where he's calling out the shitebags who run the country. Very much a theme that permeates *Nell' Ora Blu*, only our Italian lads go much further!

ROGER WATERS
The Pros And Cons Of Hitchhiking
(Harvest LP, 1984)



Not his best work overall but there's some really good melodies and ideas on this and I love all the sax and backing vocals. It's all really well-played and sounds very expensive and high end. Sort of the opposite of what I do! I'm not really a Clapton fan but he's got some nice leads on this record. I like the idea that everything is supposed to play out in real time between the hours of 4:30-5:12 am. I thought about doing a similar thing with *Nell' Ora Blu* but ultimately felt stretching it over longer led to a better variety of songs. I find Roger's solo stuff a lot more interesting than what Pink Floyd put out without him. Plus, he continues to wind up all the worst people, so good on him!

STELVIO CIPRIANI
Quel Pomeriggio Maledetto OST
(Cinedelic LP, 2016, recorded 1977)

Funky, sleazy '70s Euro crime score with good use of congos throughout. It's trashy and violent but Cipriani brings a level of class. Some of the guitar sounds like it was recorded straight into the desk, giving it that dry, fuzzy transistorised sound, which I love. It's a technique I've used many times myself. Stelvio was brilliant. I was lucky to see him in concert with an orchestra at Sala Petrassi in Rome. He played a deep selection that night, which introduced me to much of his diverse catalogue. Incidentally, we're looking at playing *Nell' Ora Blu* in full for the first time at that same venue, next year.

ENNIO MORRICONE
Milano Odia: La Polizia Non Puo Sparare OST
(GDM LP, 2014, recorded 1975)

You can't write an Italian score without acknowledging Morricone. I know Vaughn was listening to a lot of Morricone when he wrote his pieces for the album. Obviously, the western scores are more famous, but I like this one, written for a *poliziotteschi* classic. He did a few of those in the '70s. Any time you see Tomas Milan or Henry Silva in a film, you know you're in for a treat. This one is more of a symphonic soundtrack with some nice saxophone thrown in, but you can still hear Morricone's recognisable style.

Nell' Ora Blu is out on 10th May on Rise Above

João and co keep the countryside clean and tidy

New Horizons

As work on BEAUTIFY JUNKYARDS' fourth album *Nova* nears completion, ANDY MORTEN takes a sneak peek into "The Lab"

"There are some components that have always been present in our music," begins bandleader João Branco Kyron, "but on this album they're more on the surface. I'm talking about the synths, samples and electronic drums. It's a shift that allowed us to explore other zones and influences we cherish. It also made me take a different approach for the lyrics, talking about other spectres of stories and images."

The Lisbon-based aggregation emerged in 2013 with a beguiling self-titled debut that re-imagined nine vintage psych-folk cornerstones by the likes of Vashti Bunyan, Heron and Linda Perhacs for the 21st century. Three self-penned albums for Ghost Box increasingly showed an innate grasp of mood and melody, as well as a fondness for open-door collaboration. "Since the beginning we've loved to invite other musicians into our creative space," João continues, "always people with whom we have a strong affinity with, sometimes from the same field as ours but also musicians from other latitudes that can help us create something special. Having said that, we feel very fortunate to have some really special guests on this album: Paul Weller and Dorothy Moskowitz each guest on a song, and we have our label mate, the fabulous Jesse Chandler (Pneumatic Tubes, Mercury Rev, Midlake) playing the flute."

"We feel very fortunate to have some really special guests on this album: Paul Weller and Dorothy Moskowitz each guest on a song"

Demos were cut in the group's own rural recording set-up, which they've christened The Lab. "Sessions full of improvisation and experimentation with new synths. From that stage, we choose the best ideas and started to work on each song, most of the time in smaller groups: bass and drums, guitar and synths, voices." Recording proper, and the all-important mixing, took place in Lisbon-based studio Bela Flor with long-time collaborator, sound engineer Artur David. "It has a nice room to record live and is equipped with a wonderful set of analogue machines (compressors, effects), something we value very much. It gives us the opportunity to experiment with different equipment until we reach the sound we are looking for."

With this embracing of electronics both old and new ("nova" being the Portuguese for "new"), a couple of bits of kit have become cherished allies. "We used a very nice little piece of equipment called Organelle, which can be used as a synth, a sampler or as an effects unit. I can also mention our beloved Roland Space Echo, a tape effect unit that we used a lot, on voices and instruments."

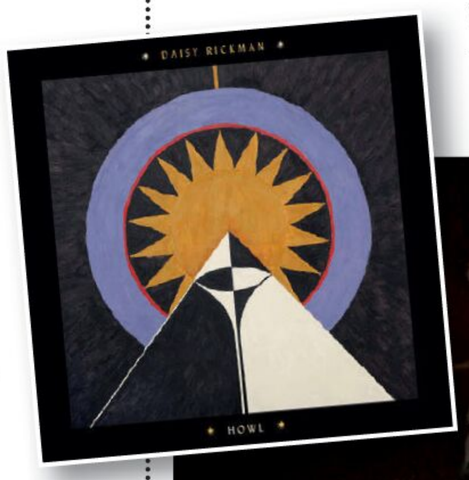
Out with the old…

Nova is due in September on Ghost Box

Celestial Rhythms

Cornwall-based musician **DAISY RICKMAN**'s *Howl* is an *avant*-folk *tour de force*. **CAMILLA AISA** discusses the "sonic, spiritual and visual"

Instruments have always been in Daisy Rickman's life. They were in the house when she was a child; her parents played but didn't impose lessons or training. Later, she'd pick up the guitar to learn the occasional song online, but it wasn't until she found herself in Brighton, in her 20s, that she felt a proper connection with music. "My friends used to have jams in their basement," she recalls. "That's when music started to open up to me." She soon started playing drums and double bass with local group Rokurokubi. Then, she discovered opening tunings. "I'm more drawn to the intuitive side of music. Whenever I tried to learn how to read music, my brain would just shut down," she laughs.



Fast forward a few years and her intuitions – sonic, spiritual and visual – have birthed *Howl*, a cosmic folk jewel that finds her handling every instrument from percussions to cello and synths to clarinet, sitar and bouzouki. The art that graces the sleeve is also her own. "Trying to express the same thing in two different languages is something I love," she says of her work as both a musical and visual artist. "I was painting a lot during the time I was recording the album. The paintings I made were largely influenced by Hilma af Klint, who is a huge inspiration to me artistically and spiritually. The realm that she tapped into is something that I wanted to try and express musically with *Howl*."

Deeply rooted in folk (Rickman mentions Nick Drake, Karen Dalton, Bert Jansch and Anne Briggs as favourites), *Howl* also drew inspiration from Popol Vuh (their eagerness to "allow for a lot of space within a record", as she puts it), the ambient soundscapes of Brian Eno and Harold Budd, and the spiritual guidance of Alice Coltrane. Rickman indicates a favourite from *avant-garde* film auteur Jonas Mekas, *As I Was Moving Ahead Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses Of Beauty*, as another crucial reference. "He created such beautiful films of all of these moments in his life – the way he expressed that idea of nostalgia and memory was really impactful and a huge influence to me and my work. Same with folk music: it's so important to keep the relics of the past alive, but you can continue to do that in your own way, making it relevant to where we are now."

While looking back, *Howl* is most intent in looking up, its songs brimming with celestial references. Stars and nature move through the album like its most prominent characters. "I find it important to be in tune with the different parts of the year and the solstices, with their rhythms, and listen to how they inspire you to be a certain way creatively."

Howl is out now from daisyrickmanbandcamp.com

"It's so important to keep the relics of the past alive, but you can continue to do that in your own way, making it relevant to where we are now"

Scream queen Daisy Rickman with new album *Howl*

Divine Inspiration

Barcelona-based **MAGICK BROTHER & MYSTIC SISTER** release the first of two concept albums exploring the prophetic qualities of the Tarot. **DUNCAN FLETCHER** gets immersed in their spiritual grooves

"Our studio is in a stone and wood lodge on the ground floor of our house" states Eva Muntada, the sister half of Magick Brother & Mystic Sister. "We are very close to Park Güell, and from our window we see the magical mountain of Tibidabo. Despite being in the city it is a place that inspires us to compose peacefully. We don't have many means to record, nor great equipment, so we supplement it with imagination, many sounds and details."

Eva and musical partner Xavi Sandoval, together with new drummer Alex Carmona have just released *Tarot Part 1*, the first of two concept albums which merge prog, jazz, folk, space-rock, spiritual ragas, and The Canterbury Sound. "Perhaps the instrumentation in the arrangements with Mellotron emulating clarinet, flute, violins, bells, etc, can recall this progressive sound but on this album we use synthesisers so that everything had a more cosmic atmosphere," says Xavi. "We always look to great musicians and bands of the past… It's inevitable that references such as Mort Garson, Popol Vuh, Gong, Pentangle, and composers such as Françoise de Rouboix or Ananda Shankar appear often in our house, but we listen to very varied music from different periods and styles."

This open-minded sonic eclecticism is a constant throughout *Tarot Part 1,* which features guest appearances from Dominic O'Dair (TOY) and Glenn Brigman (Triptides). Another key contributor is virtuoso sitarist Tony Jagwar. "Tony plays on 'The Hierophant'. On the next album, he will have more appearances," says Eva. "He is an exceptional guy and fantastic to work with. He's been playing sitar for many years and is very knowledgeable about Indian music besides being a great guitarist with a very personal style. There has been a lot of chemistry between Alex and Tony; they have been very important in carrying out these fantasies about the Tarot."

Shindig! wonders what it is about Tarot cards that inspired the pair to create two albums dedicated to it? "In a world so focused on materialism and frivolity contemplating powerful images and trying to decipher their meaning can help us connect with our hidden part and delve into the spiritual," says Eva. "The cards can have the power of a revealing dream. Or help us reflect more deeply on justice, magic, death, selfishness, reason, intuition, luck, free will, kindness and anger."

"I think it's always a good time to approach Tarot as a method of consultation, an oracle to turn to" adds Xavi. "I remember a time when we consulted constantly until a reading indicated that we should stop and dedicate ourselves to making music."

"In a world so focused on materialism and frivolity contemplating powerful images and trying to decipher their meaning can help us connect with our hidden part and delve into the spiritual"

Tarot Part 1 is out on now on Sound Effect Records. Tarot Part 2 follows in mid-summer

Eva and Xavi welcome you for a reading

SCAN TO LISTEN

CARGO COLLECTIVE

CARGO RECORDS

YOSA PEIT
GUT BUSTER
FIRE RECORDS LP

Berlin producer presents an anti-capitalist cry & a surrealist-punk affirmation calling on cyber-era Prince, Arthur Russell's surrealist tones & early Björk. "Deliciously odd - a mashup of Bjork, Aphex & Laurie Anderson." Electronic Sound

THE LOVELY EGGS
EGGSISTENTIALISM
EGG RECORDS LP / CD

The Lovely Eggs return with Flaming Lips producer Dave Fridmann for their seventh album "Eggsistentialism." Without doubt the most expansive, collection of pop-psych the band have delivered yet.

CAMERA OBSCURA
LOOK TO THE EAST, LOOK TO THE WEST
MERGE RECORDS LP / CD

Camera Obscura return to Merge Records for an album of sweeping heartbreakers. For fans who have loved them from the start and those experiencing the band's lush pop for the first time.

IBIBIO SOUND MACHINE
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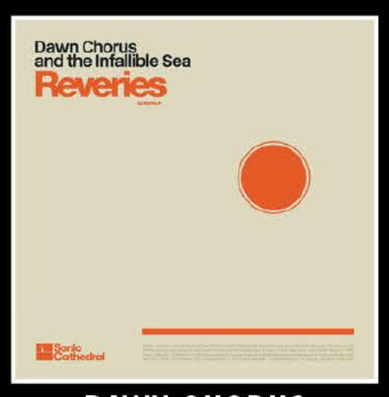


DAWN CHORUS AND THE INFALLIBLE SEA
REVERIES
SONIC CATHEDRAL LP / CD

The stunningly beautiful new album by the American ambient trio consists of delicately unfurling sonic vistas that lie somewhere between guitar-driven drone and modern classical composition.

KILBEY KENNEDY
PREMONITION 'K'
EASY ACTION LP / CD

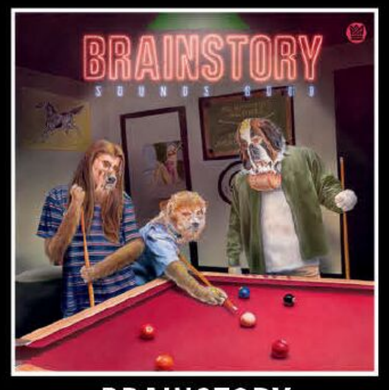
A darkly beautiful soundscape inspired by diverse sources as 'Final Cut' to the shadowy depths of early 1970s Black Sabbath.

KLAUS JOHANN GROBE
IO TU IL LORO
TROUBLE IN MIND RECORDS LP / CD

Beguiling Swiss duo's fourth album pulses with a late-night heartbeat, incorporating MPB, Italian soft rock, and jazz fusion to create an album rife with a palpable sense of ache and longing.

FYEAR
FYEAR
CONSTELLATION LP / CD

Debut from the Montréal avant-jazz/post-hardcore electroacoustic supergroup mines the interzone of Saul Williams, Moor Mother, Kae Tempest, Matana Roberts, jaime branch, John Zorn/Painkiller, Zulu, Shabazz Palaces, Damon Locks.



BRAINSTORY
SOUNDS GOOD
BIG CROWN RECORDS LP / CD

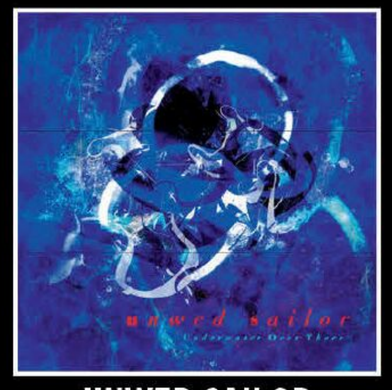
Brainstory's psychedelic California soul sound mixes with El Michels Affair's production on sophomore album Sounds Good for an instant classic album.

EYE
DARK LIGHT
NEW HEAVY SOUNDS LP / CD

Traversing a diverse spectrum of dark folk, dreampop, IDM and psychedelic doom 'Dark Light' reveals a soni kinship with Mazzy Star, Chelsea Wolfe, even Portishead.

HEY COLOSSUS
IN BLOOD
WRONG SPEED RECORDS LP / CD

A 14th album in 20 compelling years, and their most relatable collection yet. Forward thinking and at times overpowering 'In Blood' remains subtle with moments of melancholy and real poignancy.

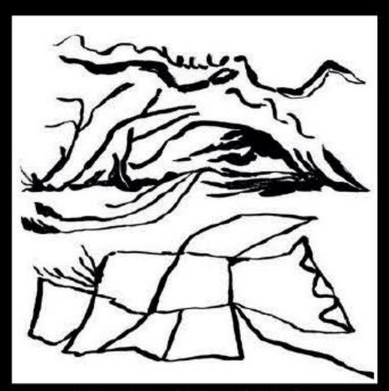


UNWED SAILOR
UNDERWATER OVER THERE
CURRENT TASTE LP / CD

With their ninth LP overall, a current of 80s goth and jangle-pop runs beneath a litany of memorable hooks and compositional left turns, creating a propulsive and intricate world of sound.

ALUMINUM
FULLY BEAT
FELTE LP

Overflowing with tenured confidence and a singular style that deftly comprises shoegaze, big beat, and jangle pop. It's a multifaceted take on established forms, using fuzz and honeyed, dual vocal harmonies.



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MEMORIALS OF DISTINCTION LP / CD

Leonard's mercurial art rock, inspiration to Black Country, New Road amongst others, is imbued with a new sense of purpose. Passionate, literate music that explores displacement, love, memory, climate change & the home.

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YOU'RE JUST JEALOUS
SKEP WAX RECORDS LP / CD

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Play Misty for Me

HUW THOMAS talks ordered chaos with Sydney psych project **MISTY LANES**

The abstract is important to Steven H Schouten. The Sydney musician's second album as Misty Lanes, *Colourless Green Ideas*, takes its title from a sentence Noam Chomsky designed to be simultaneously grammatically sound and gibberish. Having started work on the record in 2016, he borrowed the phrase to refer to the initial bursts of inspiration for its 11 tracks. "A lot of the guitars are from the demos I recorded in the beginning," he explains. "Ninety percent of the time, if I try to redo the part, it never has the same energy and excitement the demo had and neither do I."

It's an approach that has paid off; *Colourless Green Ideas* is an enchanting record rife with ordered chaos that sees Misty Lanes carve a woozy niche with a sound informed by '60s talismans Brian Wilson, The Bee Gees and 13th Floor Elevators. Schouten's songs can be very intimate – album closer 'The Healing Door' is a bare-bones phone recording ("I thought, 'Hey, I don't remember writing this...'") – but he's just as comfortable making a good racket, disappearing into full-fat jangle-pop on 'In The Dark' and slow-burning acid-rock on 'The Glorious Ones'. He's not afraid of homage; he admits that 'Get Down' was inspired by the aloof rebellion of the early Kinks, while jaunty single 'Would You Believe' lets the sunshine in with a sound indebted to the Billy Nicholls album of the same name.

The first Misty Lanes album appeared in glorious mono back in 2017. Schouten says its spartan garage sound evolved in reaction to "trying to reinvent the wheel" in a previous band. "By the time I started on the second album, I felt I could expand the Misty Lanes sound without it being forced onto the songs." Schouten shows no signs of taking it easy "I've got a lot of songs half finished, finished, barely started. Some sound like The Sonics, others sound like Sonic Youth and some sound like Stereolab. I'm hoping by the end of the year I can dig through them and cobble together the third Misty Lanes album. Who knows what it will sound like?"

"I thought, 'Hey, I don't remember writing this...'"

Colourless Green Ideas is out now on Third Eye Stimuli

Steven H Schouten gets abstract ideas

PHOTO: KAT HARLEY

PHOTO: HELEN ANDERSON

Out On The Reptiles

VIEIRA & THE SILVERS are after world domination, one town at a tim

"We are a rock 'n' roll band," proclaims Vieira & The Silvers' frontman Diogo Vieira da Silva, "and sometimes we get spooky... you decide!" Da Silva started the band as a solo project in 2022 in Norwich, where he got together with like-minded individuals who shared the same passion for music, wanting to bring songs to life. They've since been on a mission to infiltrate the London music scene after relocating there.

"The vision has always been to be a band that demands attention on stage," he states. "Above all we would hate to be predictable and safe. We are really going all the way on this one. What else is there? We love rock 'n' roll music, and this seems to be the most entertaining way of expressing ourselves. We've been very influenced by the classic-rock of the '60s and '70s, especially the Stones, Doors and Captain Beefheart."

After many successful gigs and singles 'Grasping For Love' and 'Fire In The Breeze' the band has been working on their first album, due this month on Catch 21 Records. "The songs were written over the past three years on an old Spanish guitar in the back of my old car during lunch breaks at my factory job in Norwich, then embellished in the room by the guys," da Silva explains. "We've gigged mostly in Norwich and London, some in Brighton too. We're excited to play substantially more in London now that the band is based there."

Vieira & The Silvers' exciting performances are embellished with long, almost theatrical, monologues in their songs, which fans of The Lizard King will cherish. Go see them.

As told to Gina Szatmari

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Shy Bairns Get Nowt

Folk continues its ascendancy and **AMELIA COBURN** is near the front of the pack. **SARAH GREGORY** catches up with the Middlesbrough musician to chat about Beatrix Potter, Bill Ryder-Jones and her brand-new debut album

As a child, Amelia Coburn was influenced by Beatrix Potter and Grimm's Fairy Tales. The Middlesbrough singer-songwriter began pilfering her dad's record collection, choosing the ukulele as her instrument of choice. "[It] was a cheaper, more accessible option when I was a teenager, with it being fairly easy to master a few chords."

Coburn then spent a decade or so finding her way before eventually her hard work started to pay off. Not only did she reach the finals of last year's BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards, but she also won *UKE* magazine's Breakthrough Artist. "My music's been described by others as 'tin pan-alley melodies threaded through European folk music' and 'a blur of psychedelia and baroque-pop'." However, she may (or may not) describe it, her music certainly appealed to songwriter Bill Ryder-Jones – he of The Coral, Michael Head & The Elastic Band and solo renown – with whom she hooked up her debut album.

"I've been a long-time fan of Bill's work," says Coburn. "He seemed the perfect, albeit not entirely obvious, fit for the album."

Ryder-Jones is equally complimentary. "She came in with these incredibly clever, moving songs that just blew me away. It would've taken me a day to record just her and her uke, but she wanted a bigger sound, so we had a lot of playing around with these arrangements. Honestly, the whole process was just very natural and came together without any fuss." Coburn echoes the sentiment. "He instantly understood what the album and my music were about."

Surprisingly though, Coburn finds songwriting a challenge. "It takes me months to finish songs. I usually just sit with my instrument and play around with chords, filling them in with nonsensical lyrics. For me, melody reigns supreme." As is often the case with first albums, *Between The Moon And The Milkman* features songs that she had in the locker, but Coburn feels that she has a long way to go. "I'm still in the process of finding my musical identity. As time goes on, I'm finding myself drawn towards my darker, cinematic compositions."

Between The Moon And The Milkman is out now on Quiet Crown Recordings

Amelia Coburn in songwriting challenge shock!

hear & now

PHOTO: DAN DION

Valley Lodge frontman **DAVE HILL** shares his current fave raves

LISTENING (NEW)

My friend Alessi-Laurent Marke has a great band called Alessi's Ark that has a new album called *Anchor* and I absolutely love it. The songs are sad yet hopeful and buoyant and make me feel like I'm intentionally riding a motorcycle straight through a hedgerow on a sunny afternoon in the English countryside. *The Gilded Age* by The Obsessed is great too. That one makes me feel like I'm just sitting on a motorcycle at a stoplight, giving the finger to the guy in the car next to me for no reason whatsoever.

LISTENING (OLD)

During the pandemic, I'd pick a country and watch movies only from that country for a week. One week I picked Jamaica and got really into *The Harder They Come*, which is pretty much the best one. The soundtrack is excellent too and makes me feel like I'm walking around in the Jamaica portrayed in that movie while also wearing an unstoppable outfit, which is totally different from the Jamaica I saw the time a friend got married at a Sandals Resort in Negril, which was right next door to Club Hedonism. There was only a chain link fence separating the two.

READING

I'm reading my friend Freda Love Smith's new book *I Quit Everything*, which, as hinted in the title, is about her quitting drinking, sugar, caffeine, social media, even her job. It all sounds not very fun, but Freda's writing is gorgeous, smart, and hilarious so it ends up being fun anyway. Plus, I talked to Freda right before I started reading it and she told me she didn't quit everything permanently, which has taken some pressure off.

WATCHING

I loved Tim Robinson's *I Think You Should Leave* series, so now I'm watching his earlier series *Detroiters*, which is equally hilarious and insane. There are only two seasons so as soon as I'm done, I'm gonna hunt down whoever cancelled it and make them pay.

As told to Andy Morten

Valley Lodge's Shadows in Paradise is out now on Tee Pee

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Young Mods' Forgotten Story

Sartorial Camden freakbeat vets **THE STUDIO 68!** are back with a renewed manifesto as Paul Moody tells

PAUL RITCHIE

The Studio 68! are not the shy, retiring types. Their sound is unapologetically bold and brash. A self-proclaimed pop-art riot, they were once described as "the band that laid the foundation stone for Britpop". However, their story is a frustratingly fragmented one. Doyens of a London underground scene that championed mod and psychedelia in stripey trousers when everyone else was wearing plaid shirts, they recorded an album in 1992 before it all went spectacularly awry.

"We lived in our own private universe," says lead singer and ex-*NME* journo Paul Moody today. "We listened to The Small Faces, Rod Stewart and Nazz, wore brightly coloured clothes as a reaction to grunge and were inspired by the late '60s counterculture and the '68 riots. Everyone thought we were mad."

Their debut album *Portobellohello* was belatedly released over 20 years later – too late to ride on the parka tails of Britpop but long enough for cult status to grow. Having reformed in 2022 with the original line-up of Moody (guitar/vocals), Simon Castell (drums), Thrill Heaven (Hammond organ) and Patrick O'Sullivan (bass), their mod manifesto remains undiminished. "The 68! feels like unfinished business," says Paul of their return to the fray. "We see ourselves as carriers of the 'freak mod flame'. We want to bring everyone together in a world of total grooviness. We'll storm the cultural barricades – while sipping dry martinis."

Live At The 100 Club captures the band in fine technicolour fettle. Recorded at a sell-out show at the iconic London venue, the EP features energetic old favourites like the swirling Hammond-heavy 'Double Decker Bus' and more recent compositions such as the soulful blues-rock of 'Rolling With The Punches'. "It was an incredible night. We had fans flying in from all over Europe and sold merchandise at '68 prices. It was a real gathering of the tribes. That's what we want our shows to be – tripped-out communal happenings which tap into the psychic frequencies of '68." The EP also features the vocal talents of Dani Turner, who Paul describes as "a chain-smoking modern-day Maggie Bell".

"We're here to save rock 'n' roll, of course, but ultimately, we want to make the world a groovier place," says Paul of their hopes for the future. "Let's party like it's 1968!"

Live At The 100 Club is out now on Detour. Studio 68 headline International Pop Overthrow on Thursday 30th May and appear at Happening at The Night Owl, London on 2nd August

68 Guns. Paul Moody (left) and the boys return

good news

If you're yearning for a summer of sun, sea and psychedelia, then set your sat nav for the south coast. Hosted at venues across the city, **BRIGHTON PSYCH FEST** takes place on Friday 30th August. Tickets are available now for an event showcasing talents from around the city and further afield, including Hutch, Holly Macve, Molly Payton, NewDad and *Shindig!* favourites Temples. Check the website for tickets and the full line-up. Some of the same acts appear at sister events being held in Manchester and Edinburgh on Saturday 31st August and Sunday 1st September respectively, so the road awaits anyone wanting to take in all three.

brightonpsychfest.com, manchesterpsychfest.com, edinburghpsychest.com

Four men sit immersed in conversation around a table in the mundane environment of an institutional cafeteria. They could be anyone and this could be anywhere. Yet it's none other than The Beatles, caught in intimate pose at BBC Television Centre by photographer David Magnus between rehearsals for the April 1967 global broadcast *Our World*, on which they premiered their anthem 'All You Need Is Love'. Magnus's shots of the band are part of **OFF STAGE**, an exhibition at London's Proud Galleries running until 25th May that also features Alan Chapman's candid photos of celebrity icons from The Rolling Stones to Amy Winehouse, and Erroll Jones's informal pictures of a pre-fame Prodigy.

proudgalleries.com

Biba is a name synonymous with '60s fashion. From humble origins running a small mail order business, designer Barbara Hullanicki and her husband Stephen Fitz-Simon built a retail empire with their iconic brand name defining a way of life. Hip but affordable, its appeal was universal, from Twiggy to Princess Anne. **THE BIBA STORY 1964-1975** is an exhibition at The Fashion & Textile Museum in London running until 8th September. Drawing on Hullanicki's own archive, it uses clothing, photography and film to narrate the history of a label that defined its era.

fashiontextilemuseum.org

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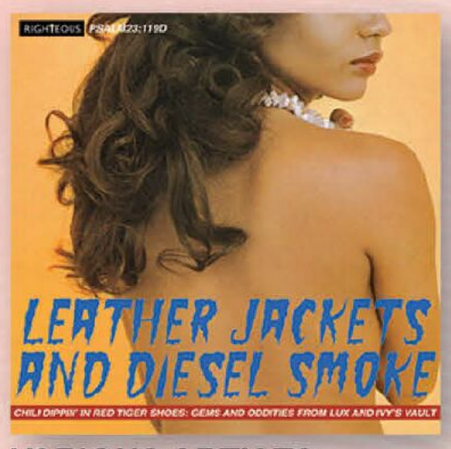

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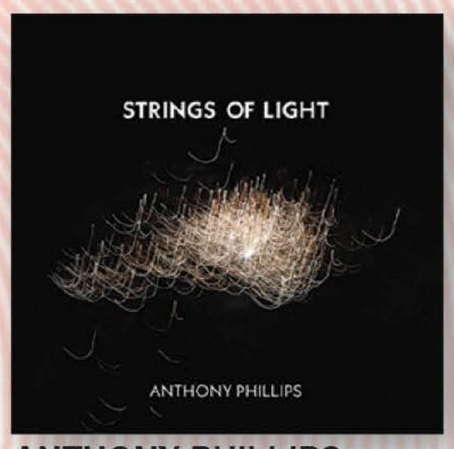

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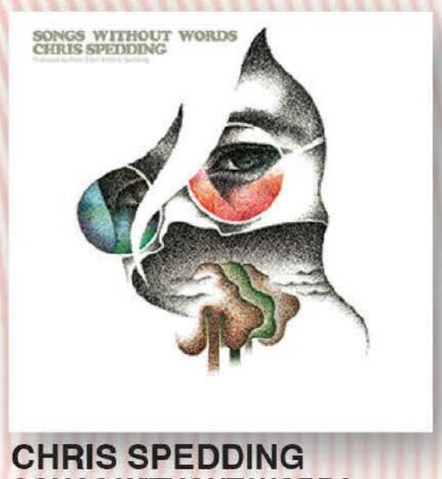

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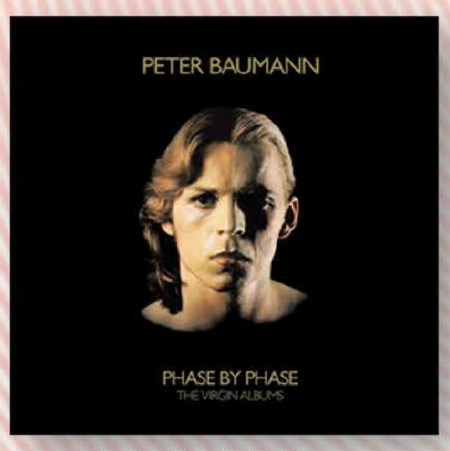

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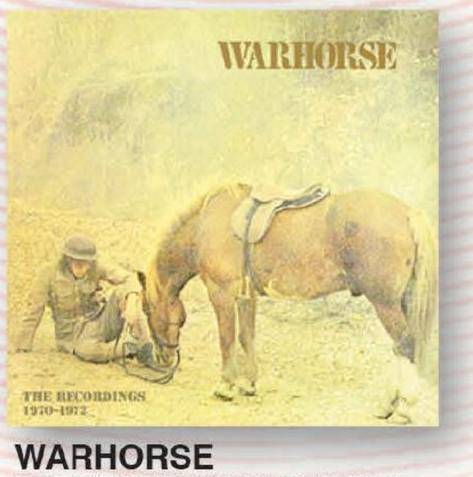

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Pickin' Up The Pieces

San Diego's Beatles and a future Eagle anthologised. **STEVE STANLEY** charts the rise of GLAD

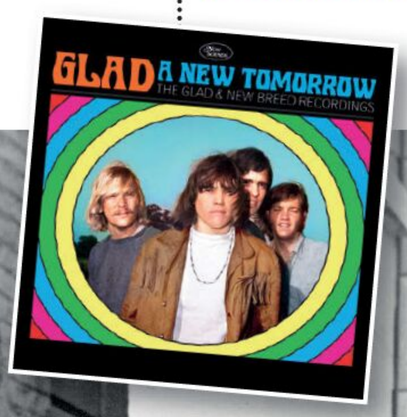
When Glad's lead vocalist (and future Poco/Eagle member) Timothy B. Schmit sings about "A New Tomorrow," the opening title cut from the quartet's newly issued compilation album on Now Sounds, one gets the sense he is ushering in a new era in the Sacramento band's career. By the spring of 1969 – the time of the release of Glad's only long player *Feelin' Glad* – the guys had been slugging it out for most of the decade, having ridden several stylistic waves.

Starting out as folkies at the beginning of the '60s – vertical striped shirts, black loafers, and a friend on double bass – high school pals Tim, Tom (Phillips) and Ron (Floegel) entertained kids at hootenannies and Catholic church auditoriums with Kingston Trio, Peter, Paul & Mary and Limeliters covers. By late '63, instrumental surf captured their imagination, and, with drummer George Hullin, the boys became The Contenders. Beating out rivals at battle of the bands contests, the group also won the attention of manager Gary Schiro, fresh from booking The Rolling Stones' '64 Sacramento show.

Flush with money earned from constantly gigging, the quartet now had a van and a solid PA system. Just out of high school and captivated by The British Invasion, the band and manager headed to San Francisco and bought some matching Beatle suits. Yet another era was beckoning, and by the summer of '65, ads started appearing in *The Sacramento Union* proclaiming, "The New Breed Is Coming."

Under the wing of KXOA disc jockey Johnny Hyde (the closest thing to Sacramento's own Murray The K) The New Breed reached a broader audience and soon became the "Beatles of Sacramento". Their debut single would be their biggest: the floor-filling 'Green Eye'd Woman' *(sic)*, would edge out The Beatles' 'Yesterday' from the top spot on the Sacramento charts. Three more singles, TV appearances, and gigs with The Lovin' Spoonful, The Animals and other legends would follow before The New Breed set their sights on recording an album in The City Of Angels in '68.

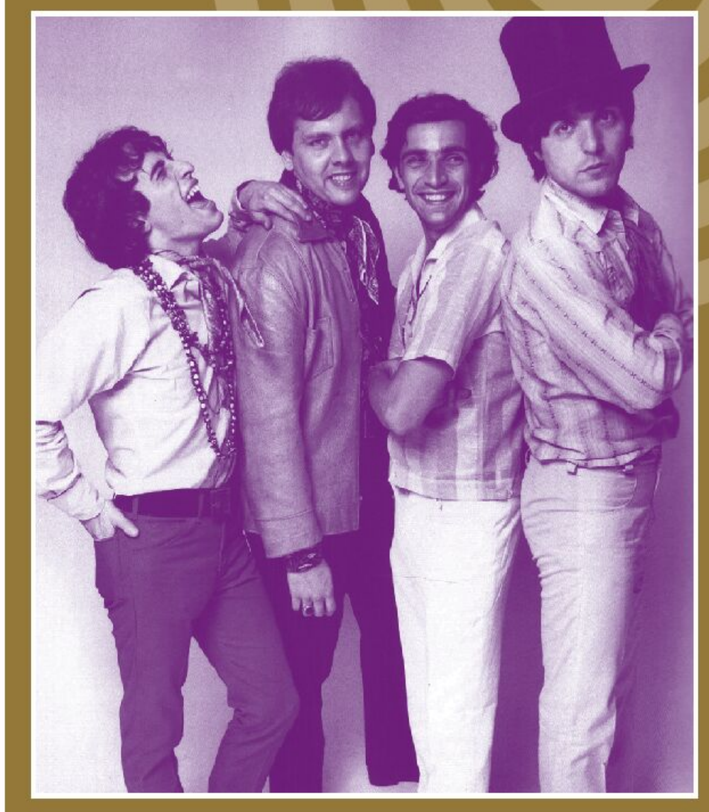
The full Glad story is provided in much more detail in Now Sounds' *A New Tomorrow* compendium. Ron Floegel concludes, "We were the biggest local group in Sacramento, opening for The Yardbirds and The Seeds, up and down northern California. Nobody else (locally) got to where we were because they didn't have *that* record. We were a natural act to throw in front."



A New Tomorrow is out now on Now Sounds

The Breed in 1967, with Ron Floegel (left) and Timothy B Schmit (bottom)

next issue



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THE ISLEY BROTHERS
The funk-soul brothers' masterpiece *Live It Up* at 50 and the group's rebirth

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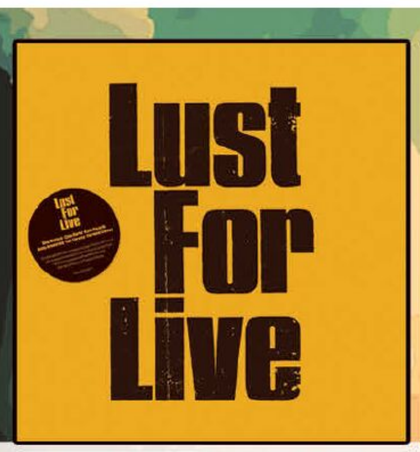

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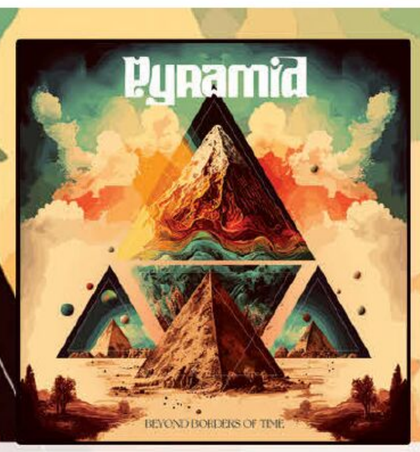

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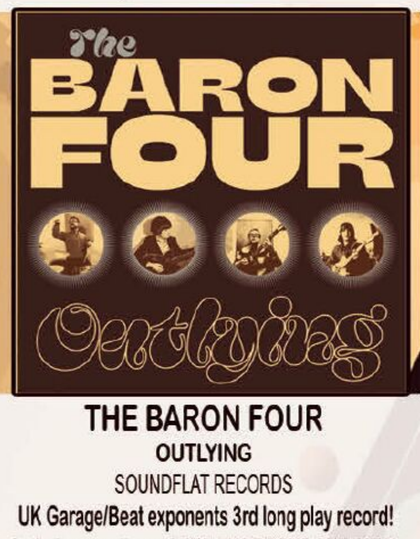

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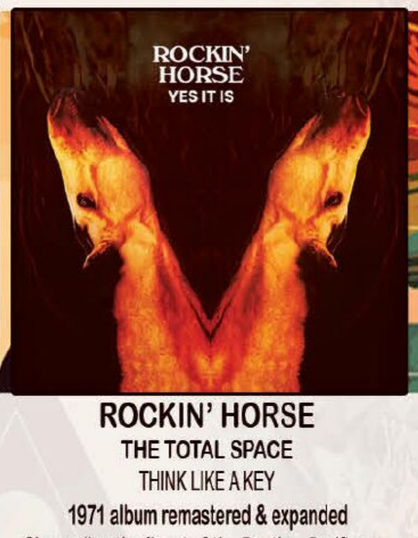

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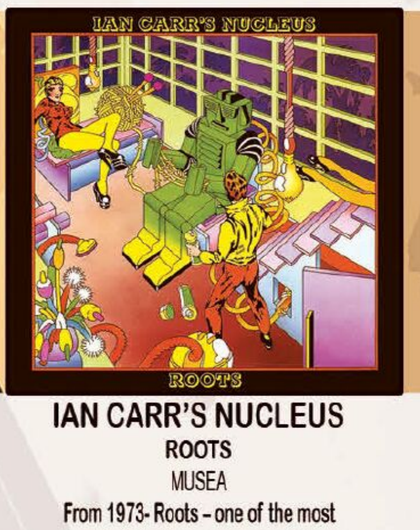

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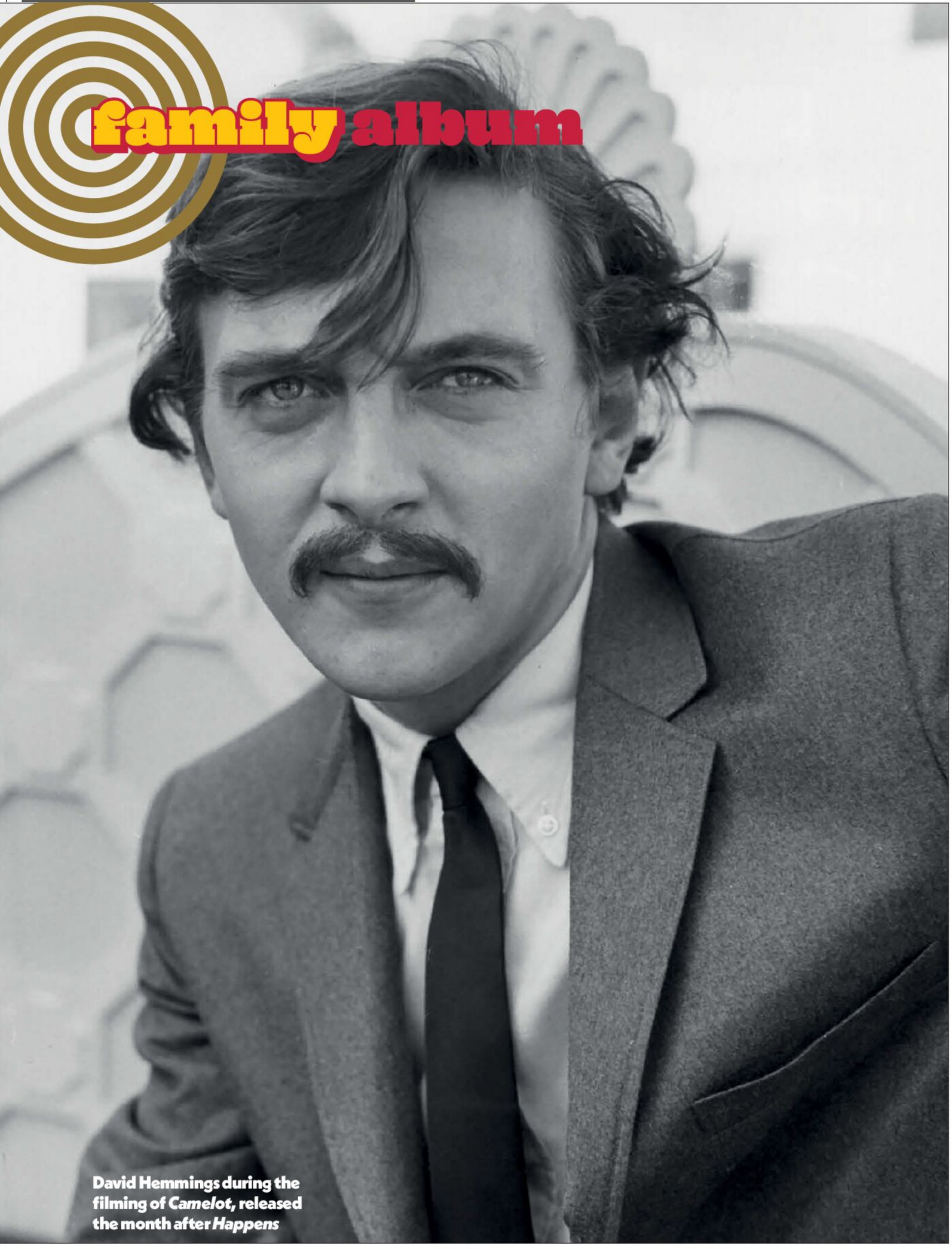


David Hemmings during the filming of *Camelot*, released the month after *Happens*

Making Something Happen

Rushed into a recording studio during the spring of 1967, iconic actor **DAVID HEMMINGS** cut ***DAVID HEMMINGS HAPPENS*** with the full clout of MGM and instrumental support from members of The Byrds.

CLIVE WEBB reassesses a fascinating psych/folk anomaly yet to take full flight

When rock 'n' roll erupted in the '50s, Hollywood hurried to exploit its commercial appeal. With a shake of the hip, Elvis Presley made the transition from music to movies.

The following decade witnessed a reversal of this trend with actors releasing records of varied artistic value, from the crooning of Richard Chamberlain to the mannered theatrics of Dirk Bogarde to the ineffable William Shatner. A rare artistic success among these recordings is 1967's *David Hemmings Happens*.

Its singer was the international star of Michaelangelo Antonioni's 1966 Palme d'Or winning film *Blow-Up*, in which he played a David Bailey-type photographer who believes he has inadvertently captured evidence of a murder. Hemmings then went to LA to film musical drama *Camelot*, immersing himself in the counterculture. His new contacts led to a record deal with MGM.

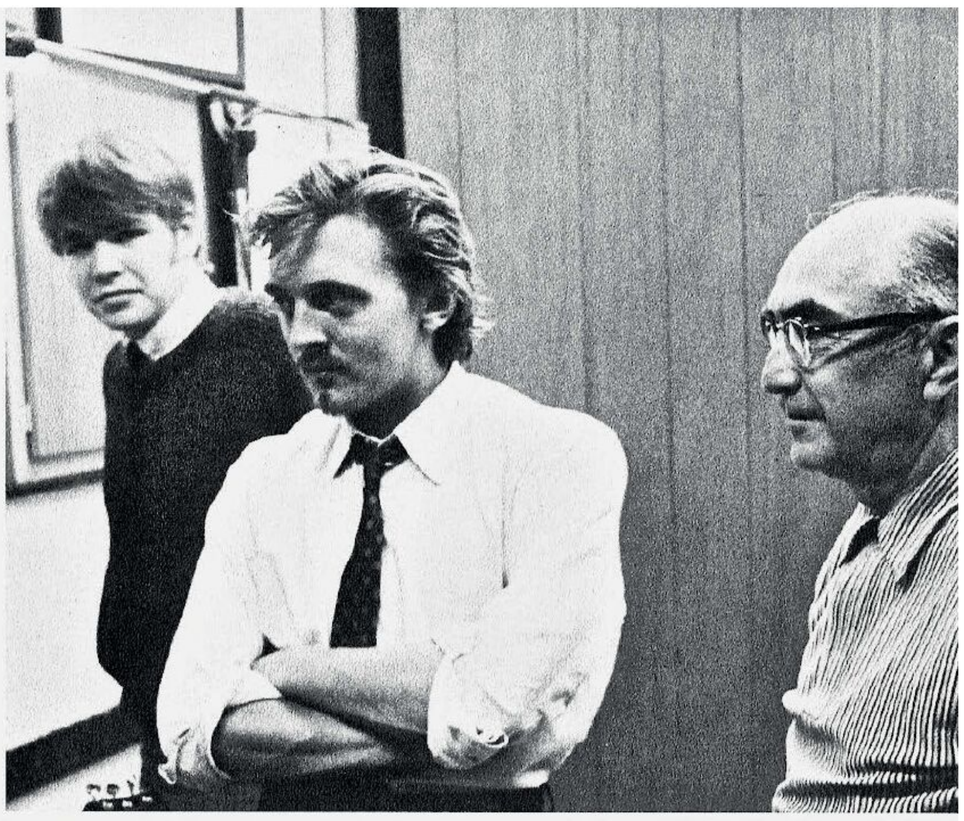
Byrds manager Jim Dickson signed on as producer and enlisted band members Roger McGuinn and Chris Hillman. Other session musicians included jazz drummer Ed Thigpen and bassist and arranger James E Bond Jr.

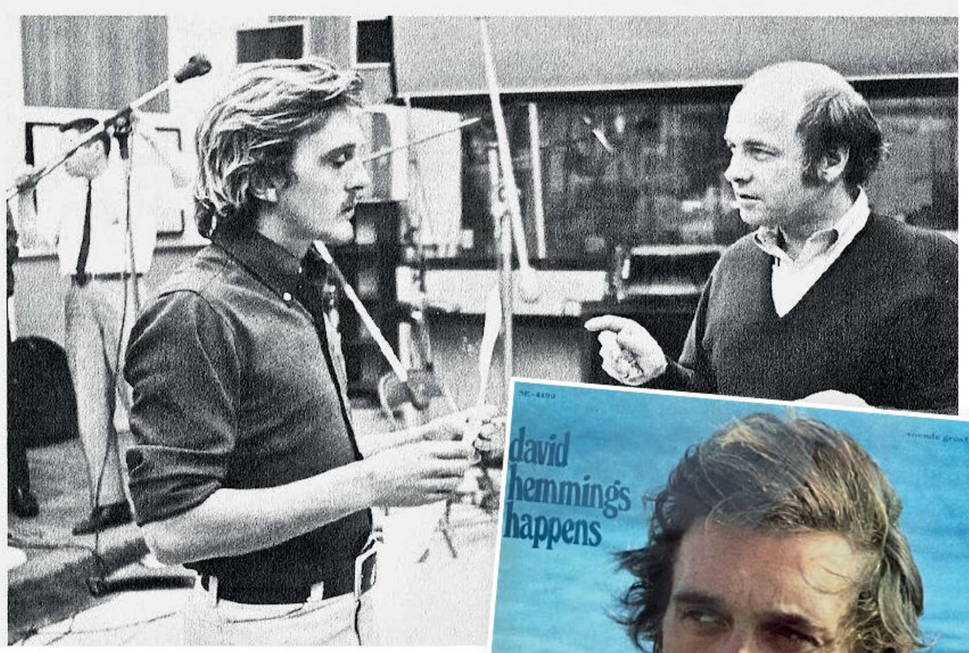
Hemmings had impressive musical credentials. A boy soprano, he performed in the original production of Benjamin Britten's *The Turn Of The Screw*. When his voice broke, he also briefly performed on the folk circuit before becoming an actor. By his own admission, the "angel purity" of his singing "had long since been scarred by singing in Bierkellers, as well as by tobacco and whisky". His voice may have coarsened but, for all that, the record would prove him still an expressive vocalist.

Hemmings recorded the album with precipitate haste in little more than a week, its title inspired by his motto, "if nothing is happening, make something happen".

It opens in ornate style with an interpretation of former Byrd Gene Clark's then unreleased 'Back Street Mirror'. Clark had recorded the song as an intended single only three months earlier, but Columbia Records turned it down. Dickinson, who produced that session, considered it too good to waste. Removing Clark's vocal, he had Hemmings sing over the original backing track. With a baroque orchestral arrangement by Leon Russell, it's reminiscent of Clark's solo debut 'Echoes'. Its Dylanesque lyric ("the Duchess of Sooth, who kept her booth selling quaint quotations") is either poetically profound or pure nonsense, but hints at a reflection on the fragility of love.

Almost half a century elapsed before Clark's own version emerged on *The Lost Studio Sessions 1964–1982*. For those who've heard that recording, comparison may be





"The sleeve notes for the album suggest Hemmings extemporised the lyrics, though he later recalled writing them while driving to the studio"

unavoidable, but Hemmings performs the song well, his bruised tenor complementing the brooding mood of the music.

Dickinson evidently believed the song had still not fulfilled its potential since later that year he turned the instrumental track over to Québécois singer Kelldecaut Réan, who recorded a new vocal for single release. It's worth seeking out for the curiosity of Réan impersonating Hemmings impersonating Clark.

The songs that follow 'Back Street Mirror' are of two types. First are the folkier tunes including a faithful rendition of Tim Hardin's 'Reason To Believe', the traditional 'Bell Birds' for which Hemmings wrote new lyrics, and 'Anathea', a song McGuinn had recorded with Judy Collins before becoming a Byrd. Bond added droning sitar to a dramatic arrangement that frames this dark tale of a young woman who offers herself to a corrupt judge in the futile hope of saving her convict brother.

Hemmings also recorded two songs for the album by Bill Martin, who he'd befriended while in LA. An associate of Michael Nesmith, Martin had composed the first song The Monkees recorded as a band, the sprightly 'All Of Your Toys', only for it to be shelved because of copyright restrictions. He scored greater success later in '67 when his allusive anti-war song 'The Door Into Summer' appeared on the Pre-fab Four's *Pisces, Aquarius, Capricorn & Jones Ltd*. His songs for this album, 'After The Rain' and 'The Soldier Wind', are maudlin reflections on disappointment and loss, "epitaphs for all the things that might have been", in the words of the latter, lightly orchestrated and sung with appropriate world weariness by Hemmings.

Interspersed among the conventionally structured songs are three tracks of what one session sheet recorded as "improvisational weirdness". The sleeve notes for the album suggest Hemmings extemporised the lyrics, though he later recalled writing them while driving to the studio. Regardless, these compositions are compelling exercises in *avant*-pop.

'Talkin' LA' has a propulsive garage beat, bursts of saxophone and a bluesy-voiced Hemmings. 'Good King James' and 'War's Mystery' are the sort of raga-rock McGuinn and Hillman had pioneered on Byrds albums *Fifth Dimension* and *Younger Than Yesterday*. The latter song is especially mesmerising, McGuinn's Rickenbacker twisting and turning around a lyric perhaps inspired by Hemmings' appearance in the forthcoming film *The Charge Of The Light Brigade*, which used the historical Crimean War to frame criticism of the contemporary military conflict in Vietnam. "Let weepy mothers find their graves," sings Hemmings. "Let the men be only slaves, to the tears that cry."

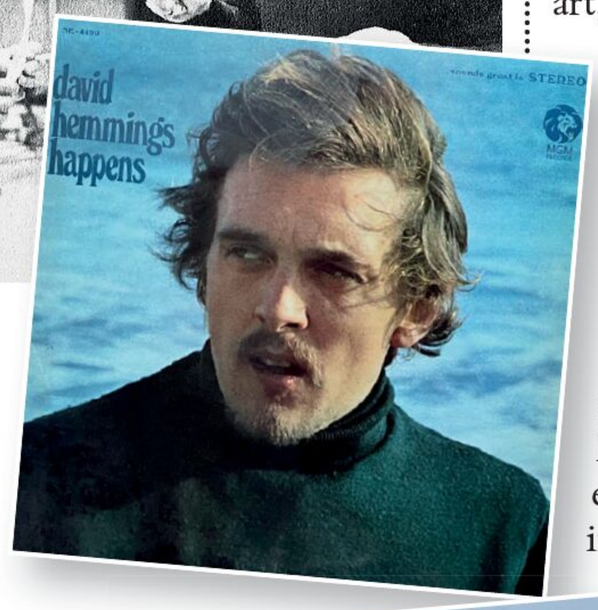
Released in September, and boasting a four-page insert containing Hemmings' art, track notes and photos of the recording sessions, *Happens* proved a misnomer, making little critical or commercial impact. *Billboard* believed the album "hit the target" but other reviews were both rare and ridiculing, *Broadside* sneering that "The star from *Blow-Up* should have been satisfied being a star in *Blow-Up*".

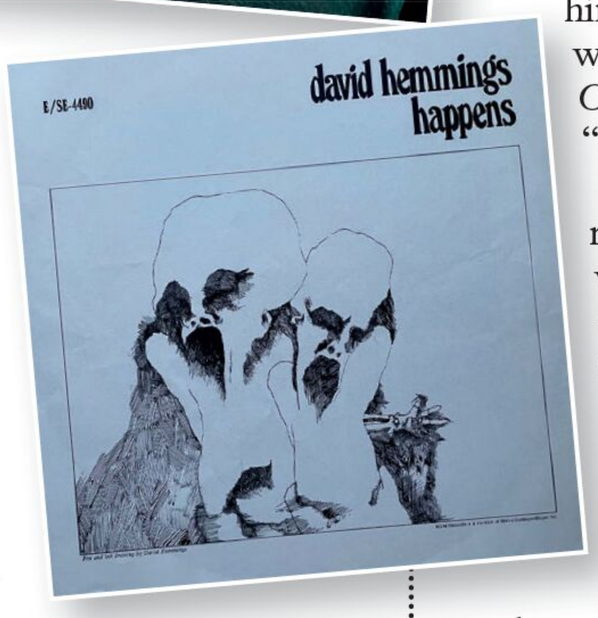
Even those involved in creating the record had little to say of its virtues. McGuinn claimed not to remember the experience, nor does Hillman mention it in his memoir *Time Between*. Hemmings himself disparaged the album, his witty autobiography *Blow-Up And Other Exaggerations* ridiculing it as "GBH of the eardrums".

The record had, as Hemmings remarked, long since "sunk without trace into the quicksand of pop ephemera". A cult reputation nonetheless led to it being exhumed from the mire. RevOla reissued it in 2004, around the time Hemmings' book appeared in print, which won it such admirers as Jarvis Cocker. With some reservation, Hemmings himself reclaimed the record.

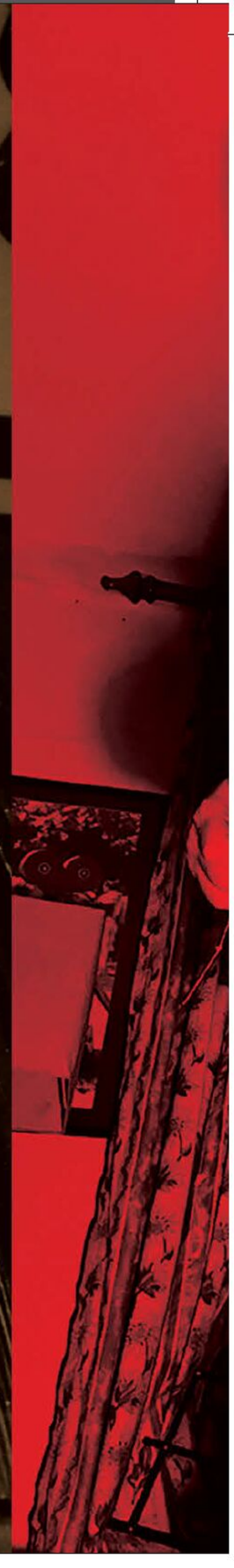
The actor never attempted to revive his recording career. An unlikely co-writer of John Young's '72 hit 'Pasadena', he was also two years later the narrator of Rick Wakeman's *Journey To The Centre Of The Earth*. Mostly he moved behind the camera as a film and television director before experiencing a career renaissance shortly before his death in 2003 with performances in such hits as *Gladiator* and *Kings Of New York*.

As flawed but fascinating as the man himself, the album he left behind should perch high on the Byrds family tree. S!





Allan Crockford in The Prime Movers, James Taylor in his Quartet, Graham Day in The Senior Service. Or is it?



Eclectic Fit

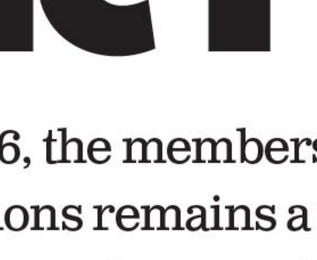
Since their original demise in 1986, the members of **THE PRISONERS** – Graham Day, James Taylor and Allan Crockford (Johnny Symons remains a one-band man) – have clocked up countless appearances in short-lived combos and as guests on other people's records.

Passing over the likes of The James Taylor Quartet, Prime Movers, Solarflares, Gaolers, Forefathers and Galileo 7, **ANDY MORTEN** and **VIC TEMPLAR** nose out 10 of their favourite hidden gems

THE GRUFFMEN
Dirty Water
(from *Medway Powerhouse Vol III*, Hangman, 1988, recorded 1983)

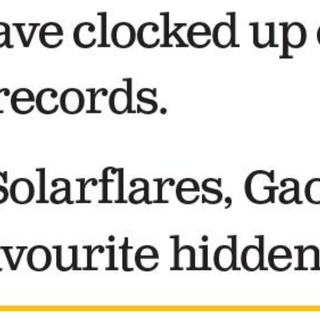
The Gruffmen were former Pop Rivet Russ Wilkins' make-the-party-last all-covers quartet with Sexton Ming on drums, Martin Waller on sax and Allan on bass. They left little recorded work to posterity but a thousand memories for those lucky to have seen them supporting The Prisoners and Milkshakes or on the carpets of myriad early '80s clandestine house parties. The set swung from 'Bony Moronie' to 'Respect' to 'Night Time' to 'Yeah Yeah'. Russ sings, "Oh Borstal you're my home," because it was; Borstal the village, not the prison! They were ramshackle but effing magnificent.

AUNTIE VEGETABLE
Fire
(from *Chives From Hell*, Spinout Nuggets, 2021, recorded 1986)



This pseudonymous quintet of Medway faces (Allan and James, Bruce Brand, Sexton Ming, Ian Smith – whoever he is) donned wigs, kaftans and Cuban heel boots and took their raucous roadshow of occult-tinged '60s rock standards into a handful of unsuspecting venues in the mid-80s. At three sessions in the legendary Woolly Studios during The Prisoners' final weeks of July-September 1986, they cut five tracks including The Crazy World Of Arthur Brown's '68 chart-topper that almost bottled the lightning and trickled out on various Hangman samplers before being buffed up for an EP 35 years later.

THE GIFT HORSES
Rosemary
(A-side, Pop-I, 1987)

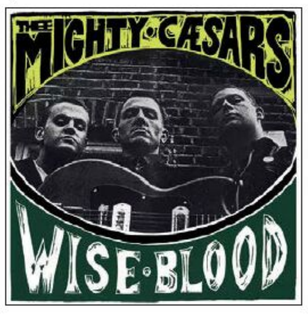


The Prisoners and Black Country mod/soul act Makin' Time shared numerous bills during their parallel lifetimes. After both bands split in 1986, this "blink-and-you'll-miss-it" (we nearly all did) aggregation featuring Graham alongside MT's Fay Hallam and Martin Blunt, and drummer Jon Brookes

"The Stabilisers ended up on Acid Jazz, Planet's sole album appeared on AJ offshoot Focus, and both Graham and James appeared on tracks by AJ heavyweights Mother Earth"

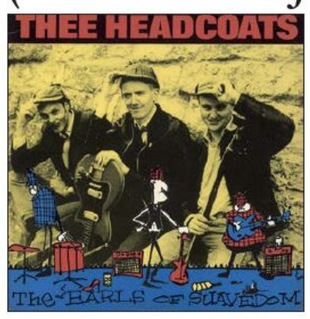
kept it together for long enough to play a handful of dates and cut two tracks, released as a German 45. Graham's Hallam-sung 'Rosemary' (which, incidentally, he now says he hates) may be woefully underproduced but boasts the trademark soaring chorus, minor-key moodiness and vitriolic lyrics that would become the backbone of his next band The Prime Movers.

THEE MIGHTY CAESARS
I Self Destroy
(from *The Wise Blood*, Hangman, 1987)



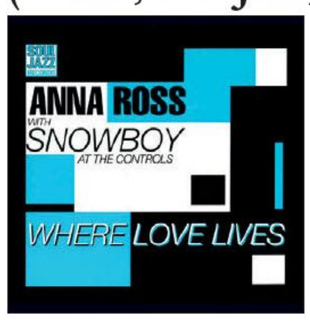
Singer and guitarist Graham was something of a surprise recruit to man the 30-year-old Premier drum-kit when Bruce Brand quit the Caesars after just one album. It proved a shrewd move for Billy Childish and John Agnew in the wake of The Milkshakes' demise. The multi-talented Day contributed occasional clarinet, organ and flute as well as exceptional drums on eight formidable, loud and lo-fi garage-punk albums in barely four years. Here he handles the lead vocal usually taken by Childish.

THEE HEADCOATS
Everyday
(from *The Earls Of Suavedom*, Crypt, 1989)



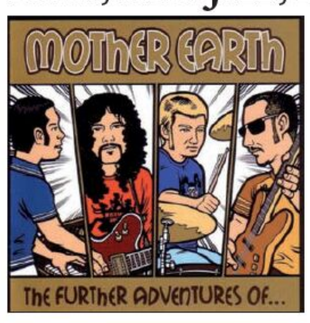
When one door closes, Billy Childish wastes no time in launching his next venture. Thee Headcoats took up where Thee Mighty Caesars left off, swapping tweed for togas and deerstalkers for laurels, with Bruce Brand back behind the traps and former Prisoner, now Prime Mover Allan plucking the four strings for their first two albums. (Allan had toured Europe as The Milkshakes' bassist in 1983, as captured on '86's *The 107 Tapes*.) Two Childish originals on this album in particular – 'Everyday' and 'Alone' – feature great Crojack basslines.

ANNA ROSS WITH SNOWBOY
Where Love Lives (Curtom Mix)
(A-side, Soul Jazz, 1993)



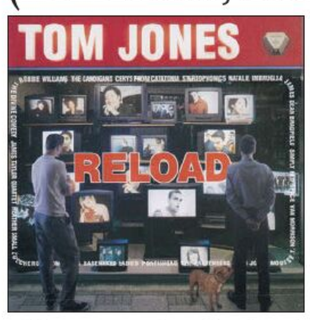
Take a glance at James's discogs data and witness not only the colossal output of JTQ but also the hundreds of artists he's helped out – whether with deft Fender Rhodes, pulsating Hammond or as producer and writer – he's very much been the man for the UK acid-jazz and soul scenes since the late '80s. James's electric piano graced this beautiful sun-kissed piece of British soul that could have come straight out of Philadelphia two decades earlier.

MOTHER EARTH
Narcissus
(from *The Further Adventures Of Mother Earth*, Acid Jazz, 2004, recorded 1996)



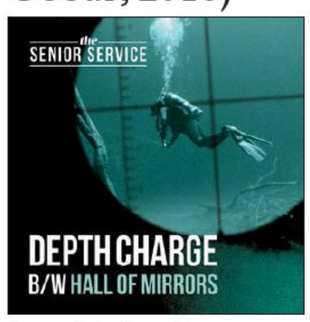
Given how much of Acid Jazz's DNA came from The Prisoners, it was inevitable that Graham, James and Allan's paths would cross that of AJ and its roster down the line. Allan's band The Stabilisers ended up on the label, Graham's band Planet's sole album appeared on its Focus offshoot in 1995, and both he and James appeared on tracks by AJ heavyweights Mother Earth. Graham's contributions remained on the cutting room floor for almost 20 years, but 'Narcissus', which he sings, shreds and co-wrote, is a hugely enjoyable slab of cosmic late '60s funk-rock.

TOM JONES
Looking Out Of My Window
(from *Reload*, Gut/V2, 1999)



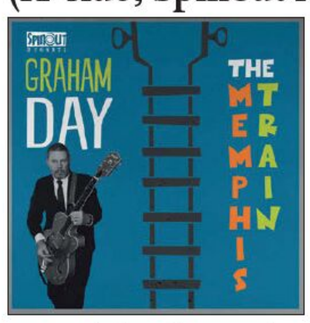
Yes, you read that right. James's engagements as *the* pre-eminent go-to keyboard guy eventually led him into Jones's orbit and a place on 1999's comeback album *Reload*, the biggest selling of Jones's illustrious career. The only self-composed song on the album, it's a slinky, bluesy spiritual soul-jazz groove, topped off with '70s synth bleeps and wah-wah flourishes, yet James' own contributions are curiously muted – his Hammond hum taking a back seat to the dancefloor-ready percussion and Jones's red-blooded delivery.

THE SENIOR SERVICE
Hall Of Mirrors
(B-side of 'Depth Charge', Damaged Goods, 2016)



Prisoners fans can hardly have failed to notice Graham's love of '60s spy/cop/Gerry Anderson TV and film themes with the band recording a couple of handfuls of instrumentals in their five-year career, including a storming cut of 'The Joe 90 Theme'. Eight or nine years ago he fulfilled an ambition to form an instrumental band with three friends from the deep well of Medway talent: Jon Barker, Darryl Hartley and Wolf Howard. This Hartley-penned out-take from their debut album is ready made for you to imagine your own opening scenes, plotline, and cast your lead actors.

GRAHAM DAY
The Memphis Train
(A-side, Spinout Nuggets, 2021)



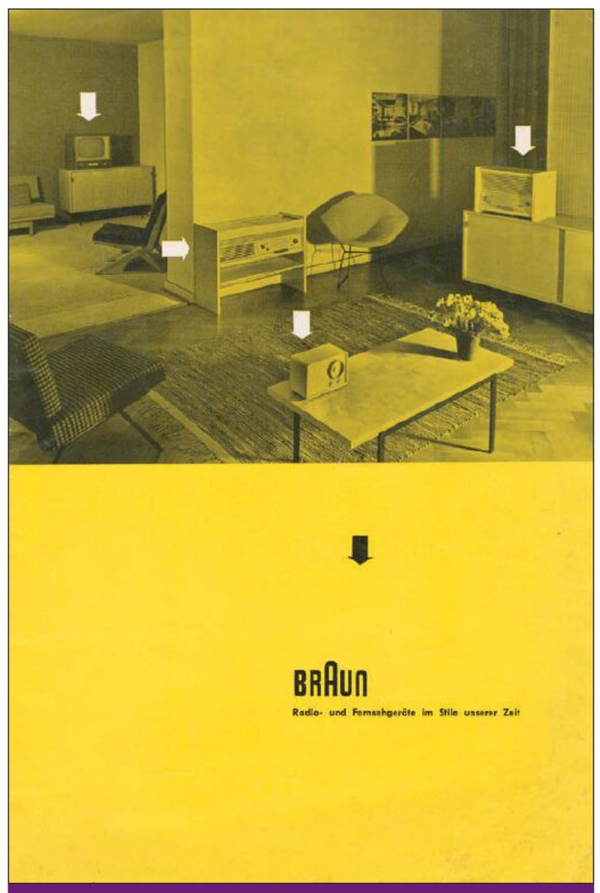
The Medway clan of musicians staved off the boredom of lockdown by plotting their next imaginative or surprising contribution to monthly themed nights of covers broadcast over Zoom and YouTube hosted by The High Span's Kevin Younger. Among Graham's many and invariably superb efforts was this Rufus Thomas Stax classic, a favourite of the man himself (Graham, that is, not Rufus), that was ultimately polished up for a limited 45 release. Check out other lockdown treats 'Crazy Horses' and his 'The Sound Of Silence' duet with The Claim's Dave Read. S!

The Prisoners' Morning Star is out on 10th May on Own Up
The Galileo 7's You, Me And Reality is out now on Damaged Goods

Going Out Of Stylus

JONNY TRUNK's latest luxurious homage to the golden age of branding spotlights "Hi-Fi brochures 1950s-1980s", a period during which home entertainment saw a winning combination of cutting-edge technological advances and the iconic, stylish design tropes of the day.

In this pictorial extract, he picks some of his favourites



BRAUN

In 1955, Dieter Rams joined the company as an architect and interior designer. In '61 he was appointed head of design, a position he held until 1995. Early (and now classic) audio products developed by him and his team include the SK4, a combined record and radio player (known as 'Snow White's Coffin') and the T 1000 transistor radio. Some of the brochures shown here, like many of the products they feature, are mythically rare.

JA MICHELL ENGINEERING

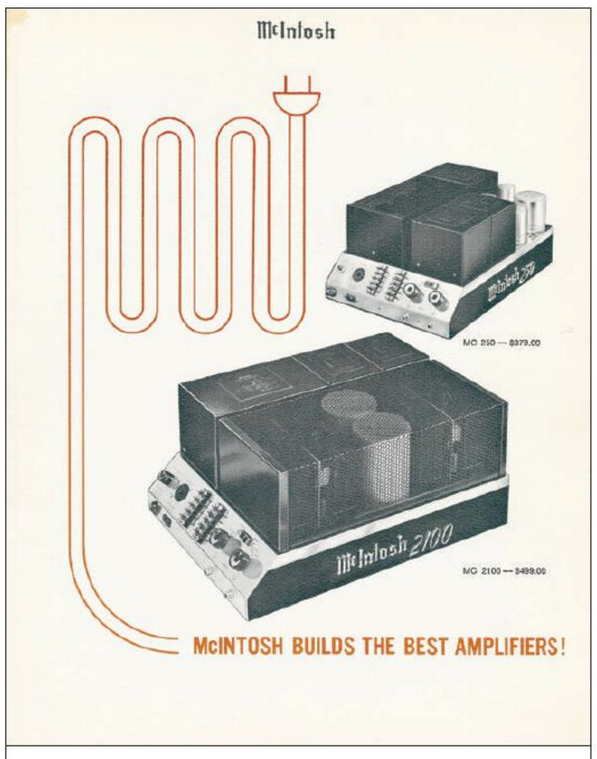
The company, originally based in Borehamwood, has been manufacturing exceptional analogue products since 1973. They also produced the Transcriptors Hydraulic Reference Turntable – arguably the world's most famous turntable – as used in Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (as demonstrated by Malcolm McDwell in the film, above).

KLH

From their small base in Cambridge, Massachusetts, KLH briefly became the largest loudspeaker company in the world. Specialising in superior high-fidelity reproduction, audiophile-quality speakers, KLH released several groundbreaking models. The company was sold to David Kelly of Klipsch and Voxx fame and still thrives today.

PYE

This Cambridge-based company, founded by William Pye in 1896, began life manufacturing scientific instruments for teaching and research. They eventually diversified into music, records, TV production and more (they even made the hand-held radios used by agents Bodie and Doyle in the UK television series *The Professionals*). Pye was sold to Philips in 1976 who continued the brand and famously produced the V2000 video format along with Grundig, eventually losing out to the cheaper and more popular VHS.



McINTOSH

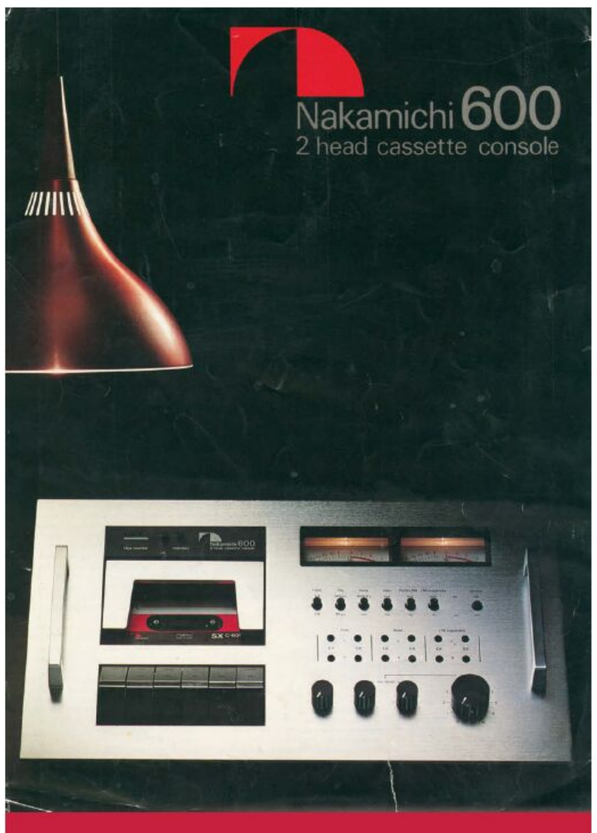
The Grateful Dead used McIntosh amplification for their legendary 'Wall Of Sound' stage show. McIntosh powered the sound at Woodstock in 1969. DJ Kool Herc, pioneer of hip-hop, used one between his two Technics turntables at block parties. In terms of pure sonic amplification, it gets no better. Vintage McIntosh amplifiers are highly sought after for their warm and lively reproduction.

SCOTT

Hermon Hosmer Scott established his audio company in 1947. Based in Massachusetts, they were at the forefront of amplification technology throughout the '50s and produced some superb equipment, both for the home and scientific markets. The company ceased trading in '72 as funds to expand ran dry.

DUAL

The Dual-Motor – a groundbreaking half-clockwork, half-electric gramophone motor – was followed by the Dual turntable (1935), a product so popular that after World War II, Dual became the largest manufacturer of turntables in Europe. They continued to be successful and inventive in the audio market until the '70s, when a tsunami of cheap Japanese technology smashed everything apart.



NAKAMICHI

After making tape machines for other companies (such as Fisher and Sansui), in 1973 they started making their own branded tech. They went on to produce groundbreaking tape machines and recorders, with almost fetishistic ideas and concepts, such as self-centring record players, flip-auto reverse and the world's first three-head cassette deck. All models are now highly desirable on the collectors' market.

Audio Erotica is published by Fuel

20 questions

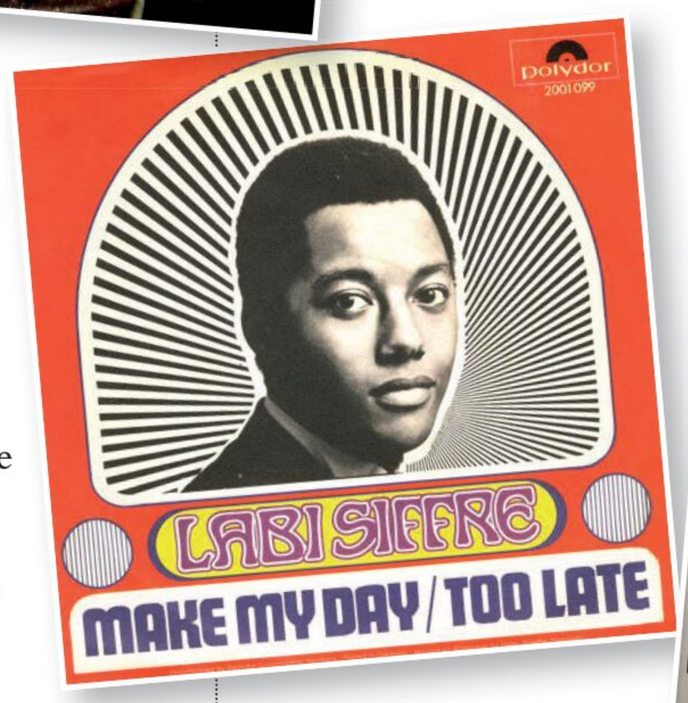
Crying, Laughing, Loving, Lying

LABI SIFFRE emerged in the early '70s as a singer-songwriter of great subtlety, blending irony, humour and social commentary into a soulful, commercial whole that chronicled the human condition and spawned a handful of enduring hit singles and albums.

As his catalogue is remastered for vinyl, he tells **JON 'MOJO' MILLS** about bigotry, finding his voice and the importance of learning

"I wrote and write *me*. That's all I can do" Labi Siffre enjoys the first flush of success

Labi in May 1970; the same year's debut album and single; press ad for '71 follow-up *The Singer And The Song*



Shindig!: You studied at The Eric Gilder School Of Music, as did Richard Wright (Pink Floyd), Christine McVie (Fleetwood Mac) and David Essex. What was special about the place and what were the most important things you learnt there?

Labi Siffre: I had only four lessons at The Eric Gilder School Of Music. Lesson one was a singing lesson with Eric. I sang a couple of jazz standards *a cappella* for him. Eric listened then said he wasn't going to teach me how to sing because I already knew how to sing and already knew how I wanted to sing but I didn't know how to breathe. So he sent me (for lesson two) to a guy who, I think, sang in the chorus at The Royal National Opera House. He patted my tummy and told me about the muscle that helps you breathe in and out, the diaphragm, and how to use it.

I took the next lesson with Eric twice and this was the lesson that really changed my life. I think the lesson was called "Musical Appreciation". It was a lesson in how to listen. There's a huge difference between hearing and listening. As lesson material, Eric used Walton's Symphony #1, a piece that remains very important to me. He would play the recording and say things like, "Listen to what the strings are playing. Now, listen to the clarinet melody, and the French horns. Can you hear how they connect to what the strings and clarinets are playing?" I describe it inadequately. When Eric gave the lesson, a new world appeared to me. I'd thought I'd been listening to music, but I'd been missing so much. It was the most important lesson I learned as a musician: How to listen.

S!: It's mid-60s Soho and you're playing guitar in the second house band at Annie's Room, a nightspot fronted by jazz vocalist Annie Ross. The likes of Nina Simone and Big Joe Williams are passing through. There must be a wealth of stories from those early days.

LS: Big Joe Williams' advice to us, as a trio – Bob Stuckey (on the Hammond), Woody Martin (drums) and me (guitar) – was "always keep your dignity". Mose Allison, Blossom Dearie and Betty Carter also appeared while we were there (more lessons). One night, Winifred Atwell, famous and successful in the charts with recordings in the style of a pub pianist, came in after hours. She told me to sit at the piano with her and then played an amazing jazz rendition in the style of Errol Garner. She made a very successful living playing stuff I didn't dislike but didn't think much of and here she was showing she knew where the gold was and she knew how to shine it.

"I knew I wasn't mainstream, and that was lonely. Then I found Laura Nyro, Randy Newman and Harry Nilsson and realised there were other others. That was a comfort and a relief"

S!: You've talked about emulating Wes Montgomery. Who else were your musical influences around that time?

LS: My musical influences then? Bird (Charlie Parker), Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, Charles Mingus, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Betty Carter, Fats Domino, Little Richard, Errol Garner, Jimmy Reed, Wes Montgomery, Ahmed Jamal, The Modern Jazz Quartet, Archie Shepp, Cecil Taylor, Stan Tracey, Gil Evans, Gary Burton, Mel Tormé, Ray Bryant, Carmen McCrae, Jimmy Giuffre, Gerry Mulligan and many, many, many more. I was lucky, my brother Kole has excellent musical taste and had a wonderful record collection.

S!: Amsterdam was revelatory for you as a young musician. How did it differ from '60s London?

LS: Amsterdam was a revelation insofar as the Netherlands was a civilised country that realised and had the courage to accept that "Love is Love is Love is Love". The UK/GB was an uncivilised country of spineless, homophobic bigots.

S!: I believe you toured as the opening act for Ike & Tina Turner. That sounds like a challenging gig for a guy and guitar. How was that and when?

LS: I opened, successfully, for the band Chicago at The Olympia in Paris, toured with and opened for The Supremes and The Carpenters. I don't recall opening for Ike & Tina Turner. I think I'd remember that!

S!: It's always interesting when a singer-songwriter adds a cover version to their albums – Harry Nilsson's 'Maybe' from your debut is a beautiful choice. You've mentioned the artists you thought special: Nilsson, Newman, Nyro. What was it about these American artists that fired you up?

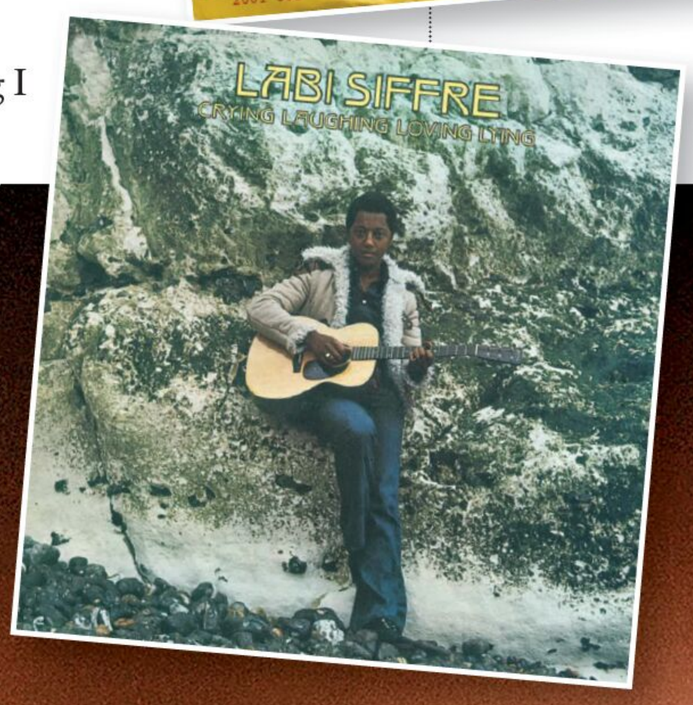
LS: By my second album I knew I wasn't mainstream, and that was lonely. Then I found Laura Nyro, Randy Newman and Harry Nilsson and realised there were other others. That was a comfort and a relief.

S!: You first appeared on *Top Of The Pops* in August 1970 when you were introduced as "competent and professional, despite being new to the scene". Your compositions were much more advanced and inventive than a lot of what was happening during the early '70s – particularly for someone so young. Was it a deliberate choice to go beyond the simplistic songwriting that had started to appear at that time?

LS: No. I wrote and write *me*. That's all

I can do. After trying to be Jimmy Reed and then Wes Montgomery in my mid-teens and early 20s I began finding me as a writer and musician. It was a natural thing.

S!: You said in 1972 that 'Rocking Chair' was "as close to rock or rhythm & blues or whatever it is that's fashionable to call it these days as you get". As an artist and writer not easily pigeonholed, did the focus on where your work sat genre-wise frustrate you?
LS: No, I always knew I was doing good work. I saw that interview a few months ago and disagree with almost everything I said in it.



S!: At this time, you also talked about being able to say things in song that you couldn't say in conversation? Did bigotry towards LGBT+ communities before you came out contribute to the autobiographical nature of your songwriting?
LS: I didn't "come out". By the time my first album was released in 1970 I'd been in a "Til death us do part" relationship with Peter John Carver Lloyd since '64. There was a 19-year difference in our ages and we were always together. You'd have had to be particularly stupid to not realise we were a couple. We were together for 48 years until his death.

S!: The "struggle" is a constant in your writing, isn't it?
LS: I'm a member of four of the groups always used as scapegoats (when money's tight people look for someone to blame. Those someones are always the same ones.) I'm an Atheist, Homosexual, Black Artist. I would need, in addition, to be a foreign disabled woman and I'd have the full set. Under those conditions, I have no choice but to pay attention to matters societal and political that others need not (or feel they need not) bother to pay attention to. Rights, human and civil, are difficult to get and easy to lose.

S!: Your first and second albums were produced by Ian Green, who people may remember due to his work with and marriage to Rosetta Hightower. Was it a conscious decision to self-produce your third LP *Crying Laughing Loving Lying*?
LS: After Ian Green delivered my second album *The Singer And The Song*, I walked into Festival's UK office and found Peter Gormley (my manager and head of Festival UK) and Mike Sloman, who ran that company day to day, discussing what to do next with the album because they were unhappy with the mixes. I sat on the sofa. After a while I heard my voice saying, "Could I have a go?" There was a pause. They looked at each other, then at me and one or both of them said, "Yes, alright."

Mainstream success in 1971-72

Heart and soul. Labi gives it his all for TV viewers in 1972

S!: How did you find your first production experience?
LS:. I had no previous experience in the job. Fortunately, I had a really good recording engineer who was helpful and sympathetic to what I was trying to achieve. I've been fortunate to have always worked with people like that.

S!: Your songs have been used in film and TV over the years. Just last year, 'Crying, Laughing, Loving, Lying' was used extensively in the film *The Holdovers*. Do you get involved in reviewing scripts and deciding what your songs are used for? Have you seen the film?
LS: I'm fortunate to be in a position to say "yes" or "no" to requests to use my work. For movies or videos we get a synopsis and sometimes info about the approach or history of the project. No, I haven't seen *The Holdovers*. yet. I hear it's very, very good. I've read about the director's approach to making the movie. His reasoning was worth reading.

"I have no choice but to pay attention to matters societal and political that others need not (or feel they need not) bother to pay attention to. Rights, human and civil, are difficult to get and easy to lose"

S!: Do you enjoy it when your music is used in this way. Do you think you have any gems in your catalogue that haven't been used yet?
LS: I'm best pleased when my work is used creatively and yes, there are loads of gems in my catalogue that haven't been used yet. A good example being 'Wash Away Your Troubles In Love', which is crying out for a good TV commercial.

S!: Your album *Remember My Song* is a classic, perhaps the best Brit-funk album of all time, with a stellar list of players including Brian Bennett, Big Jim Sullivan, Chas Hodges and Dave Peacock. What are your memories of recording it, and how does it rank in your list of your own work?
LS: All my recording, arranging, writing, playing and producing has been about learning. That's the good thing about what I do; it's a process of continuous discovery and learning.

S!: Social justice and civil rights have been important to you throughout your life. Were there any specific incidents that sparked this?
LS: Life: mine and the lives of others. Life isn't merely what happens to you. It's

1987's surprise comeback; Brit-funk classic, '75's *Remember My Song*

"Some of my experiences with gatekeepers made me unwilling to experience them again and also I've never been comfortable as a public face. If your ambition is to be famous, you should raise the level of your ambition

also what you notice is happening to you. There's a big difference between seeing and looking. There's a big difference between having thoughts and thinking.

S!: You have said that, "To be black, you have to be ethnic. To be gay, you have to be camp." Has the 21st century caught up and, in any way, mitigated this statement?
LS: That statement was specific to what used to be called "light entertainment" on UK TV in the '60s and '70s. Fortunately, times have changed (though not as much as humans boast that they've changed).

S!: What were your motives for quitting the music industry in the '80s?

LS: Let's just say we took a step back from each other. Some of my experiences with gatekeepers made me unwilling to experience them again and also I've never been comfortable as a public face. If your ambition is to be famous, you should raise the level of your ambition.

S!: With three volumes of poetry in the '90s, and now your regular online postings with 'Into the Light', have the poems taken precedence over the songs? How important is it for you to react to, comment on and, where necessary, criticise the current state of affairs?
LS: I'm not a one-trick pony, never have been, never will be, and see no reason to pretend to be. I've been on Twitter for 11 years (and, reluctantly, Facebook for fewer) and, like everyone else on social media, I publish my views/opinions/thoughts because I, like all others on social media, believe (rightly or wrongly) that I have views/opinions/thoughts that are useful contributions to human progress.

S!: In the 2022 TV documentary *This Is My Song*, you had hopes for a new album. Your music is now the subject of a definitive vinyl reissue campaign. Your music is very much alive. What are your feelings about the recognition these have received?
LS: I just carry on doing what I do: writing music, poetry, prose, learning. I'm in my studio much of the time and working on new tracks. I will say, cautiously, it's going well. S!

Contributors: Sean Casey, Chris Groom, Jon 'Mojo' Mills, Thomas Patterson, Huw Thomas

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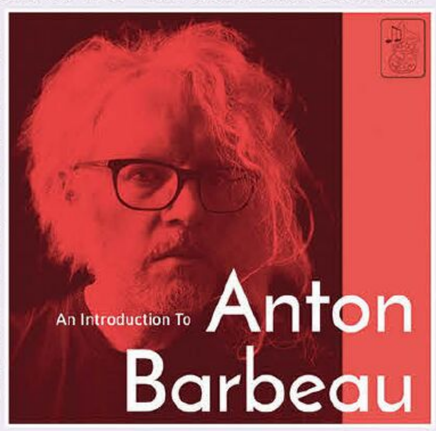
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HONEY POT with CRYSTAL JACQUELINE CD

Once described as Fruits de Mer's 'house band', The Honey Pot have compiled a lovely collection of tracks recorded for the label over the years - including covers and original songs - plus three recordings available here for the first time, including a storming live version of 'White Rabbit'

AN INTRODUCTION TO ANTON BARBEAU CD

Ant has been a great supporter over the years and we've pulled together this retrospective of some of his contributions, including covers of songs originally recorded by Big Star, Julian Cope, Traffic, David Bowie, Robyn Hitchcock, Donovan and The Monkees, as well as his own songs; including a tribute to Cardigan's Cellar Bar, Fruits de Mer's second home!



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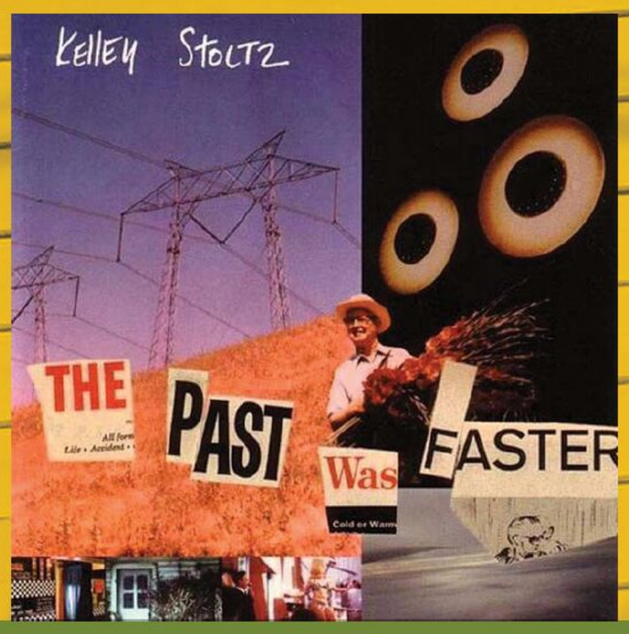
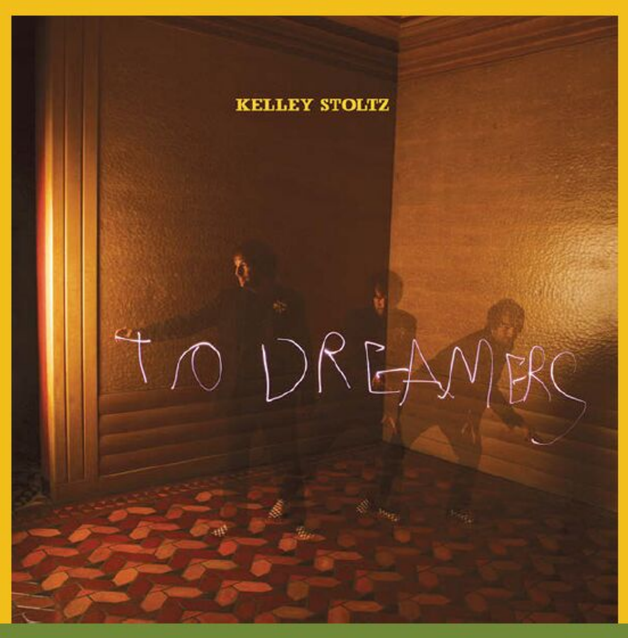
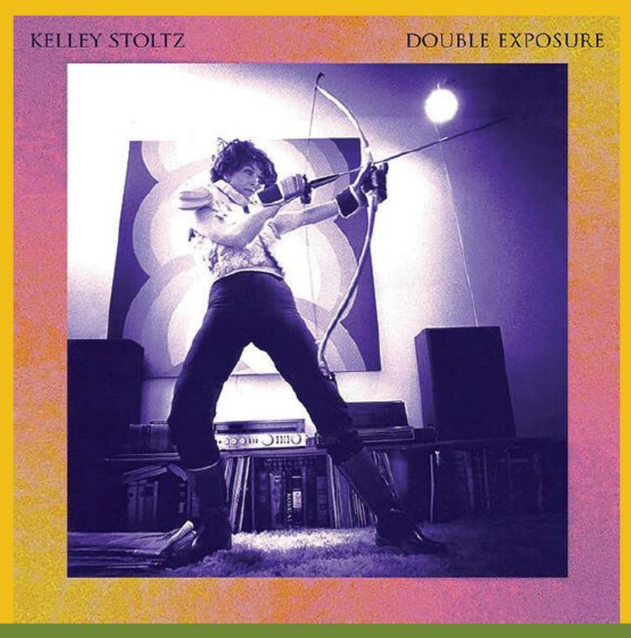
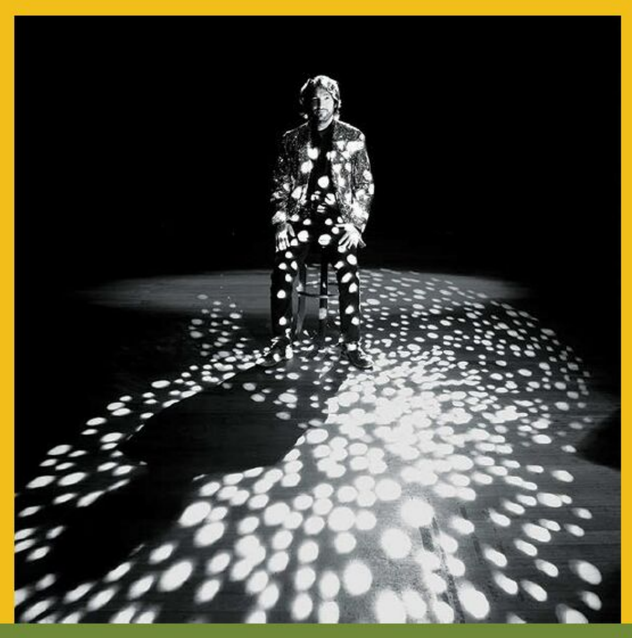


AWAY WITH THE BIRDIES

"I didn't master the F major chord till I was 30." Kelley Stoltz, San Francisco, 2013; a selection of long-players (top)







For 25 years **KELLEY STOLTZ** has been something of an indie Zelig, his path repeatedly crossing with the right people at the right times. Yet, he remains curiously overlooked by the kind of discerning music fans who should be lapping up his no-nonsense, DIY twist on classic pop moves.

As album #20 *La Fleur* prepares to land, **MIKE FORNATALE** sits down with the east coast-to-west coast transplant to discuss 4-tracks, $60,000 checks, Echo & The Bunnymen and having been on practically every cool US record label

"Music writing is a puzzle. You listen to a Beatles song, a Beach Boys song, a Bunnymen song, and you go, 'How did they do that?' and then you figure it out. And you incorporate that, and that becomes you. And hopefully you end up with something that's new and not just a pastiche. Sometimes it doesn't work out. I had at least a decade of pastiche."

Welcome to the land of mad genius. And a quarter-century recording career that most of you will be unfamiliar with. It wouldn't even be accurate to say that Kelley Stoltz has flown under your radar. His career has pretty much *jammed* the radar, along with significant portions of the ionosphere.

"I grew up in the suburbs of Detroit. I didn't really do anything musical at all when I was young... I was too busy air-guitaring, with a cigarette and a trench coat, while listening to Echo & The Bunnymen on my stepdad's stereo (which I was not supposed to be using, much less smoking in the living room) while he and my mom were at work. I had a window of time from about three until five every afternoon after school, with my tennis racquet and a floor lamp. The light bulb was my microphone." It didn't occur to him to actually learn to *play* the guitar. "I did not connect those dots, no. I was about 23 when that concept finally hit home. I didn't master the F major chord till I was 30."

The young Stoltz didn't do much with that knowledge once he had it, either. "I played in a band or two when I was 15 to 20, in the last part of the '80s. Most of that time was still spent in front of the mirror, pretending to be Ian McCulloch. In fact, I still do that. And when I do, [spot-on Mac impression] I talk like this."

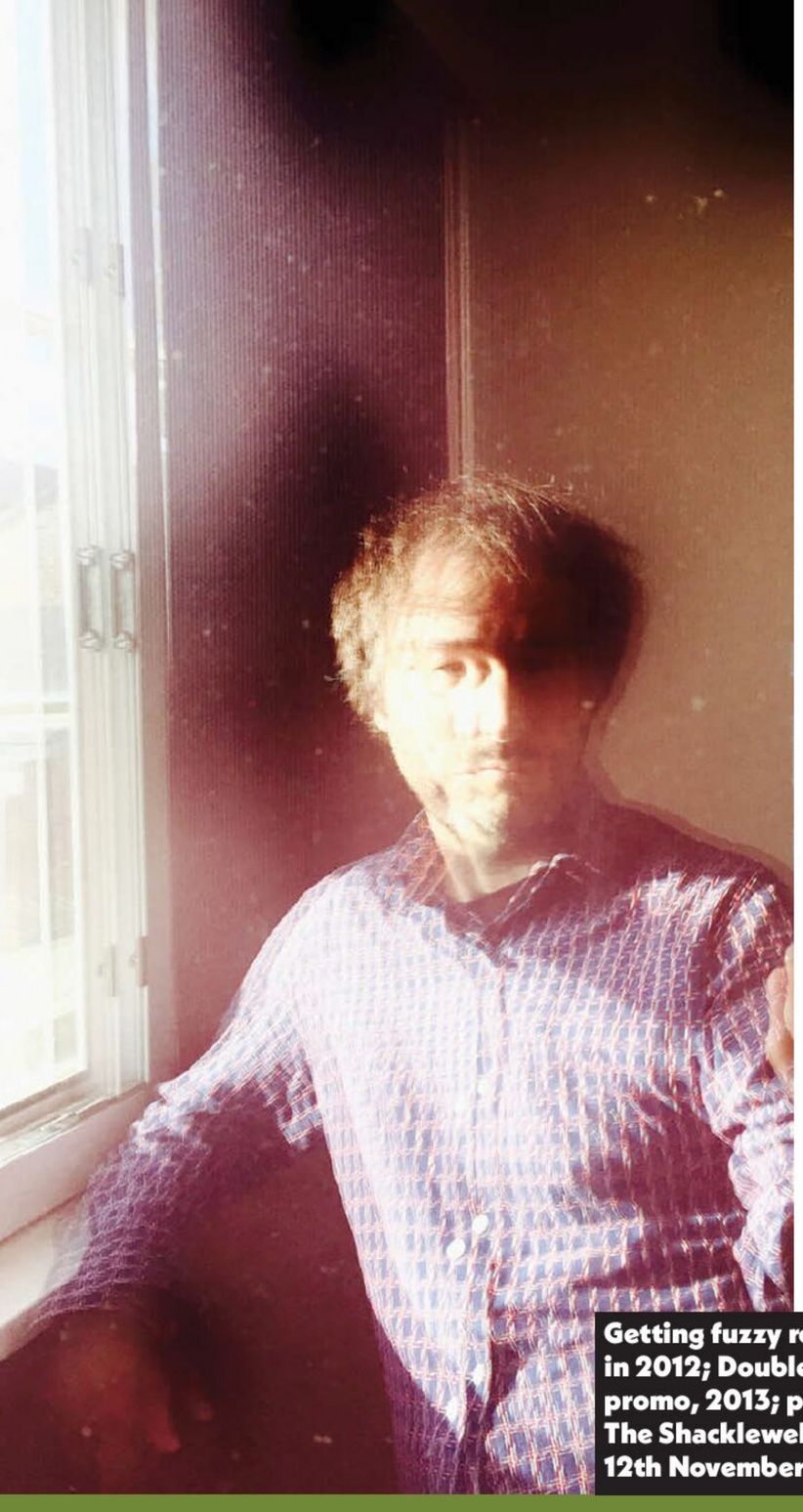
He moved to New York in 1994, at the age of 23. "I was living with a friend and I borrowed a 4-track from somebody, and I fell in love with home recording. Sitting in my room and trying to write songs. And they were really bad. I didn't know what my voice was. It took 20 years to figure that out. It's like Peter Sellers said: there is no Peter Sellers. He's a compendium of all his characters. A malleable non-personality who can therefore take on other personalities. Not instantly identifiable, like Neil Young. Or Neil Diamond. Or any of those other Neils."

He soon began working for new sensation Jeff Buckley, as an unpaid intern, under manager Dave Lory. "I would take Jeff his fan mail and things like that. I so badly wanted to be involved in music, but for those six or seven months I was basically just adjacent to it. I didn't want to share my songs with anybody because I really didn't think they were up to snuff. Just basically D to G and D to G again. I didn't realize that sometimes that's enough, if you have the right melody."

"I hated the '90s. I just didn't enjoy bombastic rock music made by angry men. So when Jeff appeared, it was like a romantic view of life. He could sing Leonard Cohen. He could sing Nina Simone. He didn't have to yell. So my '90s was basically Pavement's *Crooked Rain* album, and Jeff. Prior to that, music just didn't sound like what I liked anymore. I didn't realise that some things are cyclical. So suddenly it was like, 'Hey, you can still do *this*!'"

"Unfortunately, by then I was already 25 years old, and I hadn't exactly written *Forever Changes* or *Pet Sounds* [laughs]. Gee, I'd better get to work and learn a lot more. More sounds, more structures."

Eventually he retreated to Michigan and his grandmother's basement, wondering what was next. "I was working at a club in Detroit called The Magic Bag, doing various things and some booking. And The Magic Bag was closed on Monday nights. Finally, my friends and I decided we'd meet there every Monday night, bring our guitars and amplifiers (and our own beer of course) and figure out how this stuff works on an actual stage, in an empty room, with no one to embarrass ourselves in front of. Just sub-sub-Grateful Dead noodling. We were all still just learning. But thrilled to be on an



Getting fuzzy round the edges in 2012; Double Exposure promo, 2013; performing at The Shacklewell Arms, London, 12th November 2015

"I hated the '90s. **I just didn't enjoy bombastic rock music made by angry men.** So when Jeff Buckley appeared, it was like a romantic view of life. He could sing Leonard Cohen. He could sing Nina Simone. He didn't have to yell"

actual stage getting our sea legs. We probably sounded *avant-garde* without intending to be."

But you can only live in your grandmother's basement for so long before you become Norman Bates. "I got in a car with my friend Gus, with his drums and my Telecaster and a dog, and drove to the west coast. Just like that. Our money was running out by the time we got to San Francisco, and we said, 'This place looks pretty cool, let's stay here.' And 28 years later, I'm still here."

From '96 to '99, he wrote a few songs and demoed them on the 4-track. "As luck would have it, my friend Jerod Gunsberg had started a small record company. Five employees, two dogs, and a huge warehouse in Brooklyn." The demos were too rough for release, even in those early indie days. Enter intuitive production genius Monte Vallier, bassist for worldwide indie-rockers Swell. "I met Monte through his wife, who was my roommate. She heard me tinkering away in the basement and asked if she could play some of it for him. He liked what he heard, and he helped me cobble together the 10 or 12 best songs. So here I am, with my friend owning a record label, and Monte as producer/engineer/idea-person. He really helped clean up what had been a messy, improperly mic'ed pile of fragments. All I had were two guitars, one amplifier, and a double-console organ I had bought at The Salvation Army, which I called 'The Grandma Organ'. It weighed about 500 pounds and I wheeled it home on a skateboard. It became pretty much the basis for most of the music that ended up on the first two albums. Because it had a primitive drum machine built into it. The songs all grew out of this 'wall of sound' idea. All the flourishes, all the background sounds, all became part of the song. But I discovered that when I tried to just play them in a solo setting, there wasn't a whole lot of song there. It's only in the last 10 or 15 years that I've been writing songs that can stand alone on an acoustic guitar."

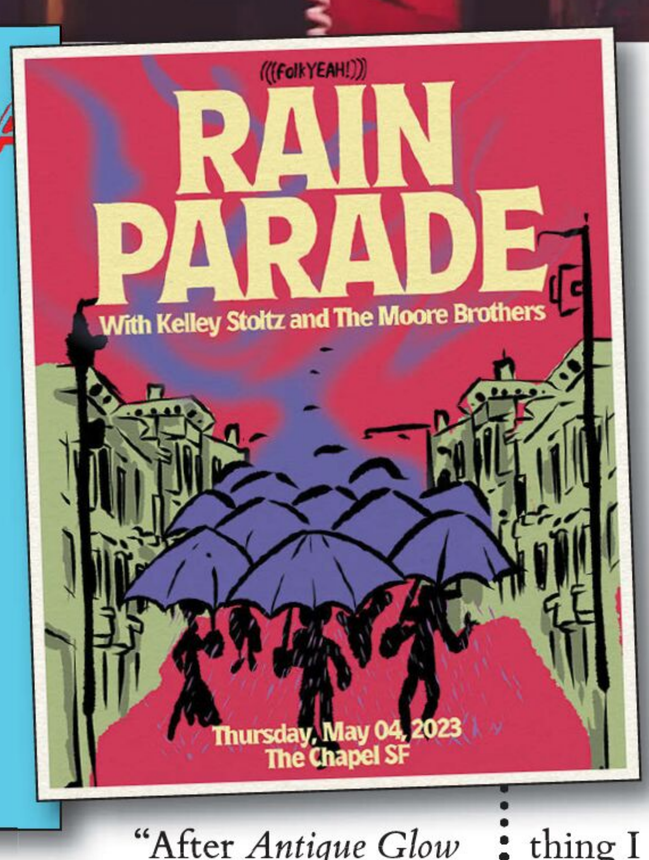
The resulting debut album, *The Past Was Faster*, is hard to find. Telegraph Company Records folded not too long afterwards, dogs and all, but do go find one if you can. It's a stunning gumbo of influences, sounds, half songs and whole songs, running an utterly ridiculous gamut. Your writer was handed a copy when he met Kelley backstage at the Cavestomp '99 festival in November. "Oh, nice, thank you. What sort of music is it?" "Well, the first reviewer said it reminded him of Nick Drake and Captain Beefheart."

"Oh. Darn, Kelley. I was going to try to get some sleep tonight."

He wasn't joking, either. That is pretty much what it sounds like. Along with healthy doses of Can, Kraftwerk, Syd Barrett, Sisters Of Mercy, Ralph McTell, Joy Division, and the sound that the jet airplane makes while you're in the aisle seat trying to sleep. The *Stoltz Bearcat*, as it were. "After that first album I realised I needed better gear. I bought a TASCAM 388, which was an 8-track reel-to-reel machine with the mixer built in. I got it on eBay for $350. Nobody was using those things anymore, and they were really cheap. But that machine was magical for me. It really became the sound of the whole album."

Having made his credit card bleed, Kelley began working regularly for local legend Ray Andersen (RIP) at Grooves Records on Market Street and crafting the songs for second LP *Antique Glow*. It's much like its predecessor, but perhaps a bit calmer, and a lot more structured. (And, happily, much easier for you to find, having been reissued on CD in 2003 and again with a slew of bonus tracks more recently.) The LP was self-pressed, something you didn't really do back in 2000. "I don't even think it was mastered,

PHOTO BY RACHEL LIPSITZ



as such. I just sent a reel of tape to Bill Smith Custom Records in LA. I had no idea that a record needed to be mastered. Or that it should be less than 50 minutes long."

In fact, only when he received the initial shipment of 100 LPs in plain white paper sleeves, did Kelley realise he hadn't thought about the covers. "Ray said I could have anything I found in the dollar bin. That was his gift. So I just took the covers and hand-painted over the existing artwork. [laughs] Every copy is different."

Stoltz and his hastily assembled band played a few local shows in support of the LP, which had been repressed to meet demand, and was quickly becoming a local sensation. In the end, 300 hand-painted and individually numbered copies sold out, and the album was given a proper re-release by Jackpine Records.

Then, an odd but significant detour. A detour accidentally influenced by your writer (that's me).

"After *Antique Glow* I wasn't quite sure what I was gonna do next. I hadn't had much success writing any new songs, recently, and then I remembered that my friend Mike Fornatale – do you know him? – had re-recorded Jefferson Airplane's *After Bathing At Baxter's* album from beginning to end, playing all the instruments and singing all the parts. And I was inspired by that."

And the choice, for Kelley, was a bit of a no-brainer. "I changed the spelling and called my Bunnymen tribute *Crockodials*."

This will all matter significantly in a bit.

As luck would have it, the headliner at one of the *Antique Glow* shows was Chuck Prophet, erstwhile member of Green On Red in the '80s, now a solo artist. "I had no idea who he was, I had to look him up [laughs]." Prophet flipped over Stoltz's music and was instrumental in generating some out-of-town interest. Soon Kelley and band found themselves touring Australia, to sensational acclaim. And then, another surprise. "I got back from Australia to the news that The Dirtbombs had been in town while I was away, and that Ben Blackwell – the drummer – had bought a copy of *Antique Glow*. A friend of mine worked at Amoeba [massive SF record store] and had suggested it to him and gave him my number and email. Nothing happened for about six months, but then suddenly Ben emailed me. 'I love your record, I play it all the time, it's one of my favourite records. Are you on a label now? What are you doing next?' And he put me in contact with Sub Pop Records! The next thing I know they're calling me to come play in Seattle. So we went. And literally no one was there except the five Sub Pop employees, who loved the album, and Dave Day from The Monks. And Dave heckled me for the entire show.

"I think Sub Pop was kinda stunned by the fact that Dave was there, and they skipped over the fact that he and his wife were the *only* ones there. But within a week they had offered me a contract for three records. I had done nothing in the way of promotion, and now here I was."

It was the first time Kelley had had any kind of recording budget. "I was a guy who basically recorded everything myself, at home, with a little help from some friends. So when they told me, 'We can give you 10 thousand dollars to make an album,' I just said, 'Great!' and put it in the bank."

The first Kelley Stoltz album for the mighty Sub Pop label was *Below The Branches*, in 2006. "I started listening to a lot of Beatles and Beach Boys. And that's

"I ended up in one of my favourite bands." Kelley opens for Echo & The Bunnymen, Liverpool Olympia, 11th December 2010

"The next thing I know Sub Pop are calling me to come play in Seattle. **Literally no one was there except the five Sub Pop employees**, who loved the album, and Dave Day from The Monks. And Dave heckled me for the entire show"

why this album sounds the way it does. I was kind of rejecting all the music I'd grown up with. Bunnymen guitars with Peter Murphy-ish vocals had gotten too easy. And so, I kind of went in reverse. I studied them the way they had studied Chuck Berry."

The album, in addition to being his most above-ground release so far, would provide the next quantum leap in his career. And you've heard it, and you didn't know who it was. Both Volvo and Regions Bank used Stoltz's new song 'Birdies Singing' in TV commercials in 2007. And, as any songwriter will tell you, JACKPOT. "I've never seen it! Ever! Much later, I finally saw one of my songs ('Memory Collector') on a commercial for Marriott Hotels, just as I was about to leave my hotel room on tour.

"And suddenly I had a song on television. And I suddenly had a lot of money. Some of my other songs got used on the soundtracks of TV shows. Cheques for $30-60,000 dollars would show up in the mail. And it finally enabled me to do music full-time. And to say, 'Hey, mom, dad, I'm okay.' And I could pay my bills, go in the studio and stay there all day."

In the midst of this whirlwind came 2008's *Circular Sounds*. "With the money from Sub Pop I was able to get some much better gear to work with. By 2007 I had this room full of gear. And that's why this record sounds so claustrophobic. 'I have a digital Mellotron, and a trumpet that I got at the thrift store, and it's *all* going on there!' It's not my favourite record, but in Spain people are always calling for songs from it."

Unfortunately, by the time 2010's brilliant *To Dreamers* came out, the bloom was off the rose at Sub Pop. "Being on Sub Pop, and getting those songs on TV, really changed my life for the better. But it also made me incredibly lazy. I had done a few big tours by that time, I'd opened for The Raconteurs. But sometime around 2008-09, when those cheques started rolling in, I got very comfortable. And I didn't want to go out on the road. What I wanted to be doing was sitting in my room making more music.

"But you only get back what you put in. I look back at it now, and when I go to LA or Portland and there are 48 people in the audience, I think, 'Well, there you go. I didn't put in the time. I didn't sleep on enough sticky floors.'"

That could have been the end. But then, another improbable event. "I had finally weaselled my way backstage enough times to get to know the Bunnymen and made friends with Will Sergeant and Ian. They had heard *Crockodials* years earlier, and they invited me to go on tour with them three times – America, the UK and then America again. And I did not think anything greater could ever happen to me. I had no higher aspiration. These were the guys who inspired me to start doing this in the first place. And I remember at one soundcheck, we were playing one of my songs called 'Pine Cone' and Mac came out of his dressing room and said (another flawless Mac impression), 'Sholtzie! Play that one again!' I had prickled the ears of my guru! I was over the moon."

But, back in real life, Kelley had no record deal. From 2010 to 2013 he did a few odd tours, got a few songs together, and went back to his old friend Ben Blackwell – who, by now, was running

BESMIRCHING SUGARMAN

In 2013, Kelley was chosen to play piano on a short tour with the recently rediscovered Sixto Rodriguez. He and a few friends rehearsed intensely in San Francisco. When Rodriguez, who was on the brink of becoming an international superstar, finally heard them, he was amazed at their attention to detail.

In 2014, after the semi-biographical/semi-fictional film *Searching For Sugarman* had become a worldwide sensation, Rodriguez tapped the band for another tour, to begin in New York City. "It was all big prestigious theatres. Just as *Sugarman*-mania had taken over America."

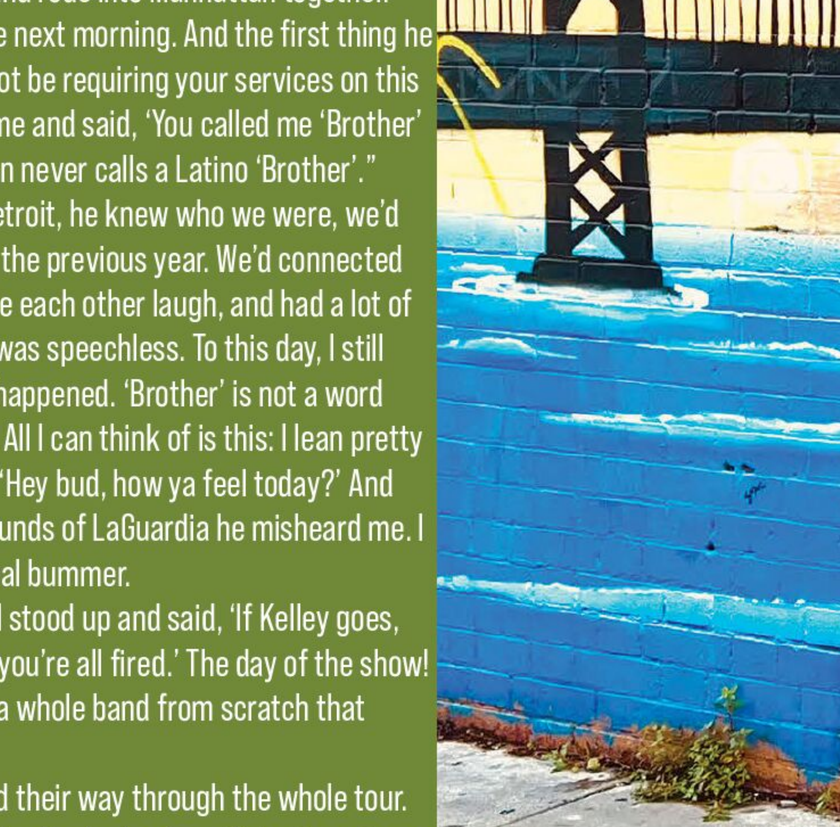
Both the band and Rodriguez arrived at LaGuardia Airport the day before the show, and rode into Manhattan together. "Sixto called a meeting the next morning. And the first thing he said was, 'Kelley, we will not be requiring your services on this tour.' What? He looked at me and said, 'You called me 'Brother' yesterday. And a white man never calls a Latino 'Brother'."

"He knew I was from Detroit, he knew who we were, we'd already done a whole tour the previous year. We'd connected on all kinds of things, made each other laugh, and had a lot of heartfelt conversations. I was speechless. To this day, I still don't know what actually happened. 'Brother' is not a word that's really in my lexicon. All I can think of is this: I lean pretty heavily on the word 'bud': 'Hey bud, how ya feel today?' And maybe, buried in all the sounds of LaGuardia he misheard me. I don't know. But it was a real bummer.

"Incredibly, the band all stood up and said, 'If Kelley goes, we go.' And he said 'Okay, you're all fired.' The day of the show! So he had to put together a whole band from scratch that afternoon."

That band gamely faked their way through the whole tour. "Some of them were old friends of mine from Detroit, so it was fun talking to them about that later. I never listened to Rodriguez again after that.

"I think of him as a sort of King Lear. And one of his daughters is named Regan!"



San Francisco, 2024; recording the mostly one-man *La Fleur*

Third Man Records in Nashville. "He played the songs for Jack White, and they offered me a one-off contract. I did *Double Exposure* in 2013." But there was no accompanying tour. "I didn't have any presence anywhere. Nobody had seen me in Memphis, or Orlando, or New Haven. So I gathered myself up and I mustered all I could on my next album *In Triangle Time*. John Dwyer, who was in The Oh Sees, had become a global sensation by that time, and had his own record label. We played a lot of gigs together, so he put out that album in 2015 and the next one, *Que Aura*, in 2017. They both did pretty well."

Right in the middle of all that came 3rd August 2016. "The email that would change my life. Again. From the Bunnymen. 'Kelley, [rhythm guitarist] Gordy has to go take care of his [ailing] mother, and we have a tour coming up. You're the obvious choice.' So I got to live my dream, and I ended up in one of my favourite bands. For three years. I just kept staring at these moving human figures who had only existed as posters on my wall when I was a kid and trying to relate to them as actual people. It was a wonderful experience and I can't believe it happened. Such a thrill.

"But the interesting karmic switch is this. In 2018, my father died. And I needed three weeks off to go empty out his apartment and have a funeral and grieve. And the band had a tour. And I said, 'You know, I just can't'. They said, 'Okay, of course, we get it, we're gonna get a fellow in from Liverpool to fill in for you.' And he filled in, and they ended up keeping him, and that was it. I mean, I get it. 'Bring On The Dancing Horses' is gonna sound great whether it's me playing the chords or someone else, and it had been really expensive for them to keep spending 12 hundred dollars to fly me over for one gig and then fly me back.

"But it stung. I felt like I had lost all my father figures right in a row. My dad... Ray, from Grooves ...and yeah, Mac as well. We're still friendly. I've done some recording with Will. I've been playing drums for Robyn Hitchcock since 2019. We just did a big Syd Barrett tribute in January for Syd's birthday. So all's good in the Play With Your Heroes department right now [laughs]. Robyn is great, he couldn't be sweeter. I think I even make him laugh once in a while."

La Fleur is out on 7th June on Agitated. Kelley's UK tour kicks off on 7th July

Wally circa 1975, L-R (top row): Pete Cosker, Pete Sage, Roger Narraway, Paul Middleton, Roy Webber, Nick Glennie-Smith

WHERE'S

In the early ’70s **WALLY** was “the band to watch”. They came second in the *Melody Maker* folk-rock competition in 1973 , were voted sixth top new British band in the *Sounds* poll in ’74 and enjoyed mentoring and support from both ‘Whispering’ Bob Harris and Rick Wakeman, who secured them a deal with Atlantic and took on the role of producers.

RAECHEL LEIGH CARTER charts their ups and downs

WALLY?

Wall formed around aspiring singer-songwriter Roy Webber in 1971. "I lived in London and had just moved to Harrogate [working for Yorkshire TV]. I was very influenced by Americana at that time and wanted to meet like-minded people." The original four-piece band included Jim Slade (who also worked for Yorkshire TV), Paul Gerrett and Alan Craig. But when Webber decided he wanted a steel guitarist in the band, things really started to come together. Paul Middleton, a lap steel player, began rehearsing with the band in the basement of Webber's house. "We wrote together and started to get momentum, playing local gigs." Wally took up a Friday night residency at Harrogate's Cock & Castle Inn, building up a strong following and creating a local buzz.

Various personnel changes followed in quick succession, Jim Slade left and was replaced by Pete Cosker and Mike Smith joined the band on percussion. Another key member joined after a chance encounter at a party on Christmas Eve 1972 where Wally were playing. Fiddle player Pete Sage, who was also playing that night, joined them on stage for an impromptu jam. The chemistry was so good that Sage joined Wally the following evening for a gig in London and stuck with the band thereafter.

With the line-up secured, the band began melding their influences: Frank Zappa, King Crimson, Yes and Genesis through to Stéphane Grappelli, Crosby, Stills & Nash and Jackson Browne.

Things began to escalate quickly when Wally played a gig at The Greyhound on Fulham Palace Road with Cockney Rebel. Webber: "We had a friend who was a chauffeur for Rick Wakeman when he was in The Strawbs and he told Rick that he should come and see us. Wakeman came along and he loved what we did. He said, 'Do not sign anything with anybody, leave it with me,' and said he would help us to get a record deal." A little while later, Webber received a call from Wakeman asking if he could come and see him at Newcastle City Hall, where he was performing. Backstage in Wakeman's dressing room, Webber was told the good news: Atlantic Records MD Phil Carson was offering Wally a two-album deal.

Meanwhile, Roger Narraway had moved to Leeds from Stevenage after answering a *Melody Maker* ad placed by a band called Spiral Highway, but that road was not a long one for Narraway. "Wally was the big noise at the time," he remembers. "They contacted me about nine months later. They were on the brink of getting the record deal with Atlantic and they'd done the *Melody Maker* battle of the bands. They'd seen me a couple of times in this other band and wanted me in Wally. Suddenly I was joining a band that was about to sign to a major company. That was exciting!"

So, drummer Mike Smith was out, Narraway was in and the record deal with Atlantic was signed in March '74. Before they knew it, Wally were at Barry Morgan's studio to record their debut album. Narraway was thrilled with how things were working out. "Eventually we were taken on with Yes' manager. For me it was quite bewildering, being such a huge fan of Yes. Now, suddenly, I'm in a studio being produced by Rick Wakeman, being part of their management stable. One memorable night, I remember sitting in Morgan Studios with Jon Anderson and Rod Stewart watching a football match, which was bizarre because I have zero interest in football."

Fiddle player Pete Sage had other memories of the experience, which involved exceeding the records of both Hawkwind and Alice Cooper. "We broke the [Morgan Studios] bar consumption record, resulting in a frighteningly high bill, which the record company made it clear to us was exorbitant!"

In May '74, Wally were due to join Lindisfarne and Lou Reed supporting The Who at their summer '74 one day festival at The Charlton Athletic ground – unfortunately, this didn't happen. Before their self-titled album was released, they had two other festival appearances lined up. The first was the opening day of the legendary and chaotic Buxton Festival on 5th July, at which Wally were expecting to open the festival at 4pm, followed by Horslips, JSD Band, Lindisfarne, Man and Mott The Hoople. Due to torrential rain and general lack of organisation, nothing went to plan and it wasn't until 2am that Wally finally managed to take to the stage, with Bob Harris introducing them (to anyone who'd managed to stay awake long enough) as "a band everyone's going to hear more of". *Record & Radio Mirror* witnessed the appearance and judged it as "sweet and ethereal rock with violin prominent – a shivering shimmering set but one which kept the musical hopes alive".

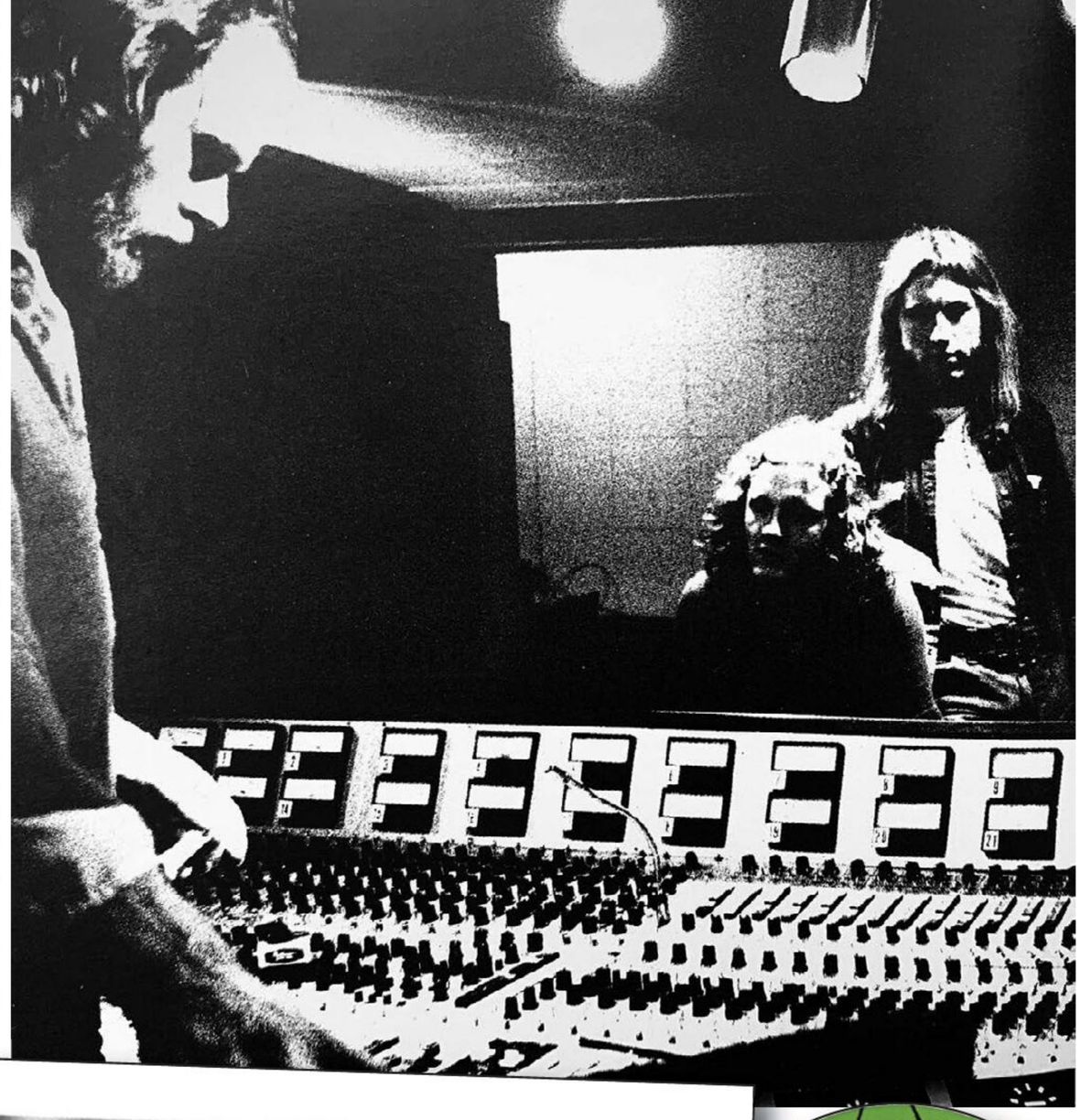
The next festival on 27th July was the far more civilised Garden Party VII at The Crystal Palace Bowl alongside The Winkies, Gryphon, Procol Harum, Leo Sayer and headline act Rick Wakeman, who performed *Journey To The Centre Of The Earth* (with a broken arm in plaster) together with narrator David Hemmings and The New World Symphony Orchestra and The English Chamber Orchestra.

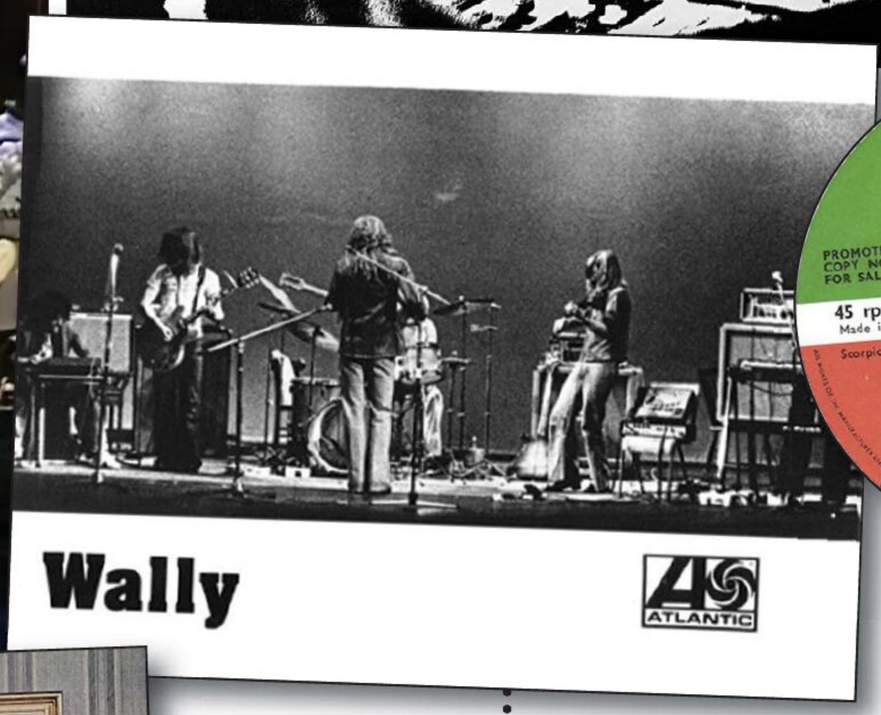
Aside from a "typographical error" that led to Wally being billed as Willy in music paper adverts, for which the promoters of the event had to take out further adverts to apologise, Wally had a much more enjoyable time at the Bowl and managed to promote their soon-to-be-released music to an audience of thousands rather than just 2am diehards and stragglers.

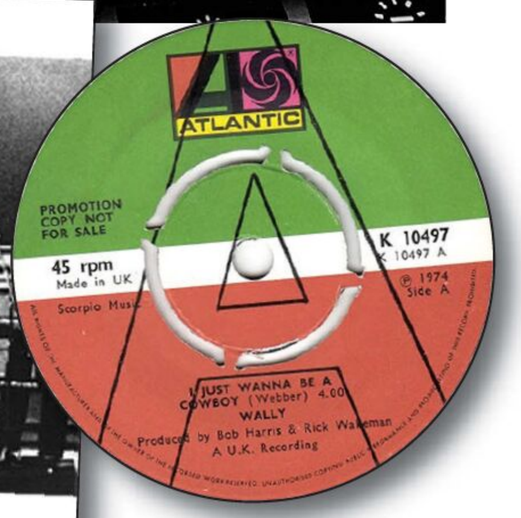
The self-titled album was released in September '74. Things looked bright, with *Melody Maker* rating it as "definitely an album worth checking out". Opening with the baroque progressive rock of 'The Martyr', driven by Pete Sage's Eddie Jobson-esque violin passages, the album sets out their stall of richly produced harmonic melodies that recalls both Crosby, Stills & Nash and Barclay James Harvest.

"We broke the Morgan Studios bar consumption record, resulting in a frighteningly high bill, which the record company made it clear to us was exorbitant!"

Boys will be boys. Scenes from Wally's adventures at home and abroad, including a guest appearance by Michel Polnareff (bottom middle)







The Mk I line-up in 1974 (top); Bob Harris oversees sessions for the first album; performing 'The Martyr' on *The Old Grey Whistle Test*, October '74; Atlantic promo photo; 'I Just Wanna Be A Cowboy' 45; 'Your Own Way' appears on '74 Atlantic sampler EP *The Best Of British*

That month, Wally were expecting to support The Eagles on their British and European tour, a match that would have showcased the band to an appropriate audience, but disappointment came when the tour was cancelled outright. They managed to squeeze in a headline show at Camden's Dingwalls on 2nd September, before heading off on a consolation prize tour supporting Leo Sayer for 14 dates. Although not quite the opportunity that the Eagles tour may have presented, at least the band played to full houses every night.

Proving themselves to be a hardworking band, Wally then followed up with 30 shows between October and December '74, alternating between Bob Harris' Whistle Stop Road Show and providing support on Lindisfarne's tour as well as squeezing in an appearance on *The Old Grey Whistle Test*.

As usual, nothing went quite to plan. Paul Gerrett left the band part way through the Whistle Stop Road Show and just two days later Nick Glennie-Smith, who had seen Wally's set at The Crystal Palace Bowl, replaced Gerrett in the band. Glennie-Smith had studied music at Trinity College, London, played with Gryphon for a while, worked briefly with Kevin Ayers and narrowly missed out (to Patrick Moraz) on the chance to replace Rick Wakeman when he left Yes.

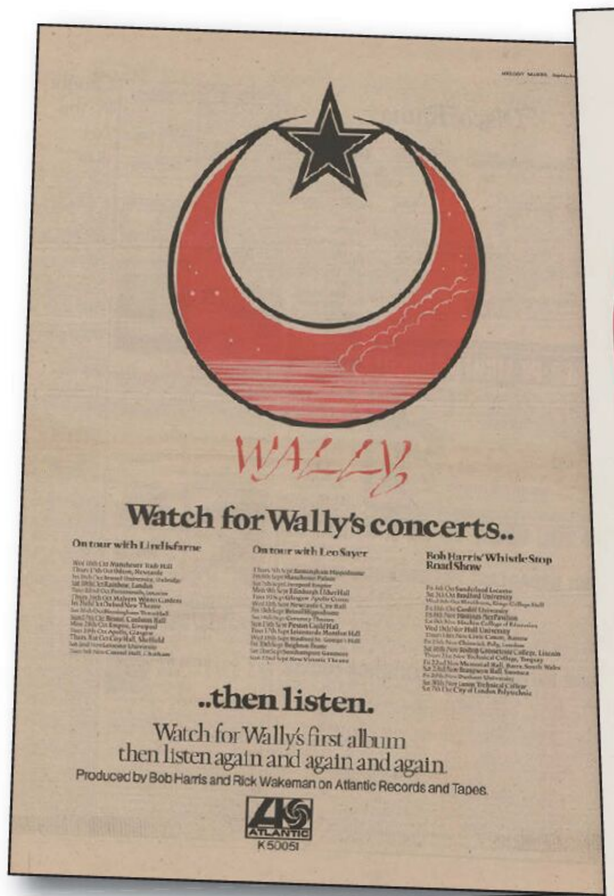
Glennie-Smith was jumping in at the deep end with just two days in which to rehearse for the rest of the tour, before preparing for the recording of new album *Valley Gardens*, which was expected to be finished by February '75. Before the year was out, however, there was time enough to sneak in another gig, supporting Lynyrd Skynyrd at The Rainbow Theatre in London. The year ended on a high note with Wally being voted sixth Top New British Band by *Sounds* readers, beating Greenslade, The Sensational Alex Harvey Band, 10cc and Robin Trower.

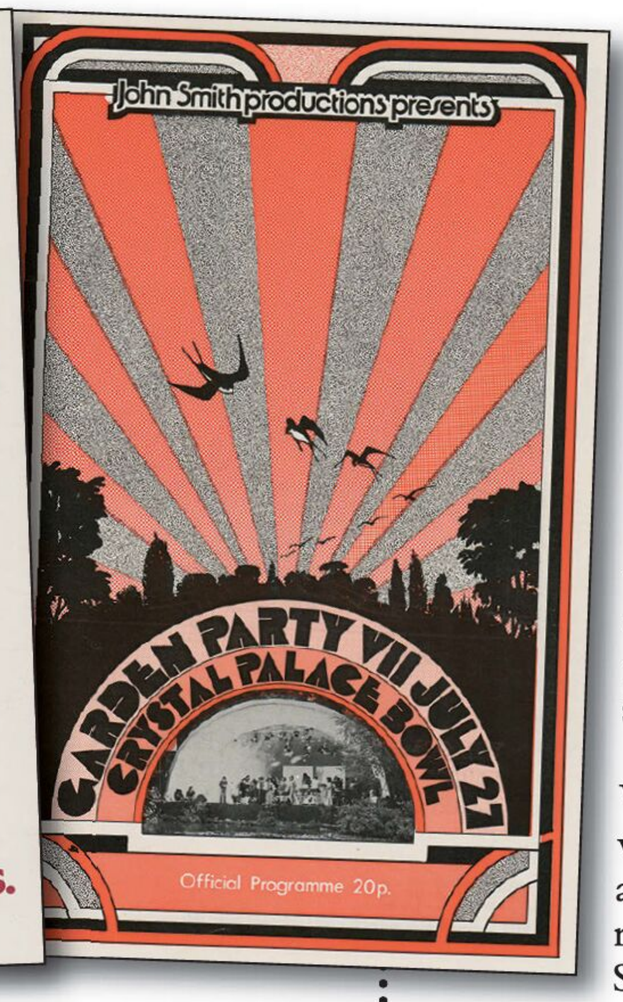
The new year started with a tour of the Netherlands in January, followed by a UK tour from the end of January '75 to the beginning of March '75 with John Golding – another Atlantic Records stablemate, whose album *Photographs* had been recorded with backing from Wally at Bob Harris's insistence – and a BBC TV *In Concert* on 18th February. The possibility of an American tour was discussed, and there was also the second album to record.

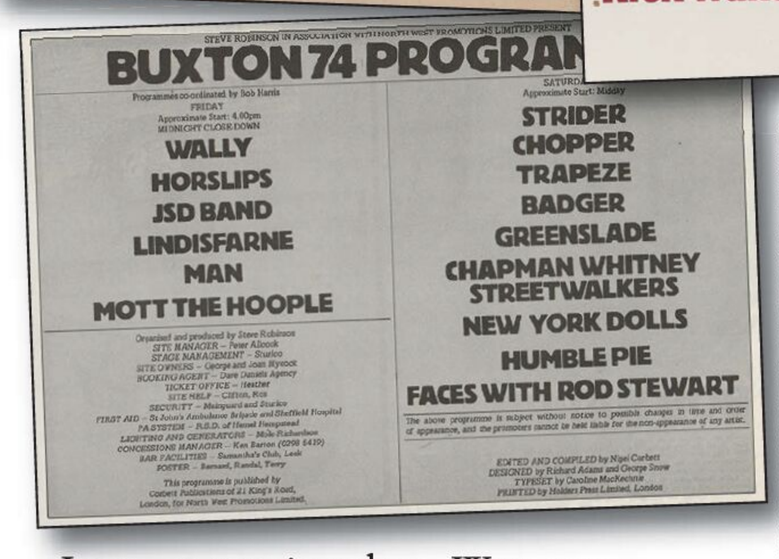
Continuing with the Yes connections, the recording of *Valley Gardens* took place at Chris Squire's studio at his house New Pipers in Virginia Water. There were a few hiccups. Despite proving to be a great connection and supporter of Wally, some of the band didn't want to use Bob Harris as producer this time and recording was halted when Atlantic suggested Wally join their French star act Michel Polnareff on his 15-date Love Sounds tour in Japan in June and July.

Wally flew to Los Angeles for rehearsals, where they stayed at The Continental Hyatt House on Sunset Boulevard, more commonly known as The Riot House due to the legendary rock 'n' roll excess which took place there. It was all very exciting, but Roger Narraway, for one, wasn't entirely happy about this detour: "I'll be honest – I was the one who didn't want to do it because we were in the middle of making [*Valley Gardens*]. And it was a financial decision by our record company; this could pay for our album."

Band leader Webber was more upbeat about it. "It was very exciting for us. We listened to [Polnareff's] music; we weren't great fans of his music, we thought, 'Hey ho, it's not for us,' but it was an opportunity for us to expose ourselves to







Japan, so we signed up. We went to America, to LA, to rehearse. We were in a warehouse that was specifically built for bands to rehearse. We were in the middle studio; on one side of us was Stevie Wonder, who was rehearsing all the brass parts for *Songs In the Key Of Life*, and on the other side was Weather Report. It was a great experience."

The schedule was hectic, with just a week to rehearse Polnareff's set before heading to Japan. The band arrived in Tokyo on 20th June, doing two days of rehearsals at the KBC-TV Studios on 21st/22nd June, followed by 15 concerts between 23rd June and 11th July. Knowing nothing of Polnareff's career, the band were surprised to find that Polnareff was the second biggest recording artist in Japan at that time and everywhere they went it was like Beatlemania, with police escorts holding the crowds off and truckloads filled with teddy bears thrown onto the stage by fans every night.

The show was like nothing Wally had ever seen or experienced before, with innovative design and staging by Chip Monck, and this wasn't entirely to the band's liking. Webber: "Polnareff said 'Right, you're gonna be in the harness – at this point, you're gonna get lifted up and you're gonna fly onto the stage.' And we were, 'Woah! No way!' We refused to do it."

The Polnareff tour was a culture shock for the band both musically and culturally and Polnareff was disorganised and not exactly the easiest "superstar" to work with, sacking and immediately reinstating Wally on two occasions. Nonetheless, the band recruited a large fan base in Japan, where they even started a Wally fan club.

Back in the UK, the band needed to finish off recording their album, but there was yet another tour lined up for them in August '75, with 20-plus dates on The Sounds Summer Rock Show, sponsored by *Sounds* in conjunction with Atlantic Records, and an appearance at The Reading Festival on the same bill as Judas Priest, Kokomo, UFO, Dr Feelgood and Hawkwind.

Valley Gardens was finally released in December '75 and consisted of just four tracks, with one track 'The Reason Why' taking up an entire side of the album. Although Johnny Walker made their single 'Nez Percé' his single of the week, with punk taking over it seemed the time for Wally's transatlantic, progressive rock was over. Although they had a good reputation in the UK, Wally just weren't shifting the number of record sales that they'd have liked and, furthermore, it wasn't enough for Atlantic to consider extending their deal; the band split in '76. Narraway: "We gigged somewhere and we were going home and we knew this was the end. Atlantic wanted to try and take back equipment to recoup some of their losses. There was a time when we were squirrelling stuff out of sight, pretending we didn't have anything. I had was, I got quickly used to being in Wally where we were relatively well looked after; the thought, then, of going back to loading the car up, travelling for three hours and playing for £20 between you – it had lost its sparkle..."

"Atlantic wanted to try and take back equipment to recoup some of their losses. There was a time when we were squirrelling stuff out of sight, pretending we didn't have anything"

After the band split, leader Webber continued with various Wally offshoot bands and is still writing and recording new material. Chris Salewicz gave Roger Narraway Phil Collins' phone number when Genesis were looking for a drummer, but Narraway deemed it to be out of his league and instead "did bits and bobs" with bands including The Scene and The Thrillers before retiring from music a few years ago for health reasons.

Two members of the band went on to achieve next level success post-Wally. Nick Glennie-Smith went on to record with Leo Sayer, Polnareff, Cliff Richard, Roger Daltrey and Paul McCartney, amongst others, and ran Snake Ranch Studios with Richard Harvey. Now living in LA, he is a highly successful film score composer, working in collaboration with Hans Zimmer, who he met at Snake Ranch. Pete Sage moved to Germany where he initially worked as road manager for Boney M. Years later, he was considering a move back to the UK when he walked into a recording studio offering to sell them his musical equipment. Instead, by a quirk of fate he was invited to audition to front a German folk band specialising in sea shanties. Sage is now a household name in Germany, fronting Santiano who have recorded eight albums, all of which have reached #1 in the German music charts.

Despite the split back in '76, so strong is the bond between Wally members that the band have all stayed in touch over the years and in April 2009 existing members got together to do a successful one-off reunion concert at The Royal Hall in Harrogate. A DVD of concert highlights, *Wally – That Was Then*, was released around the same time as a CD, also called *That Was Then*, which consisted of tracks from the two Wally albums. This was followed in 2010 with *Montpellier*, a self-released album including new material and re-recorded versions of previously unreleased tracks. Another reunion concert took place in April 2010 again at Harrogate Royal Hall, this was recorded and released independently by the band on CD under the title *To the Urban Man*.

As it will soon be 50 years since the release of *Wally*, Webber is considering the possibility of an anniversary event. Watch this space!

JOiN THE CLUB

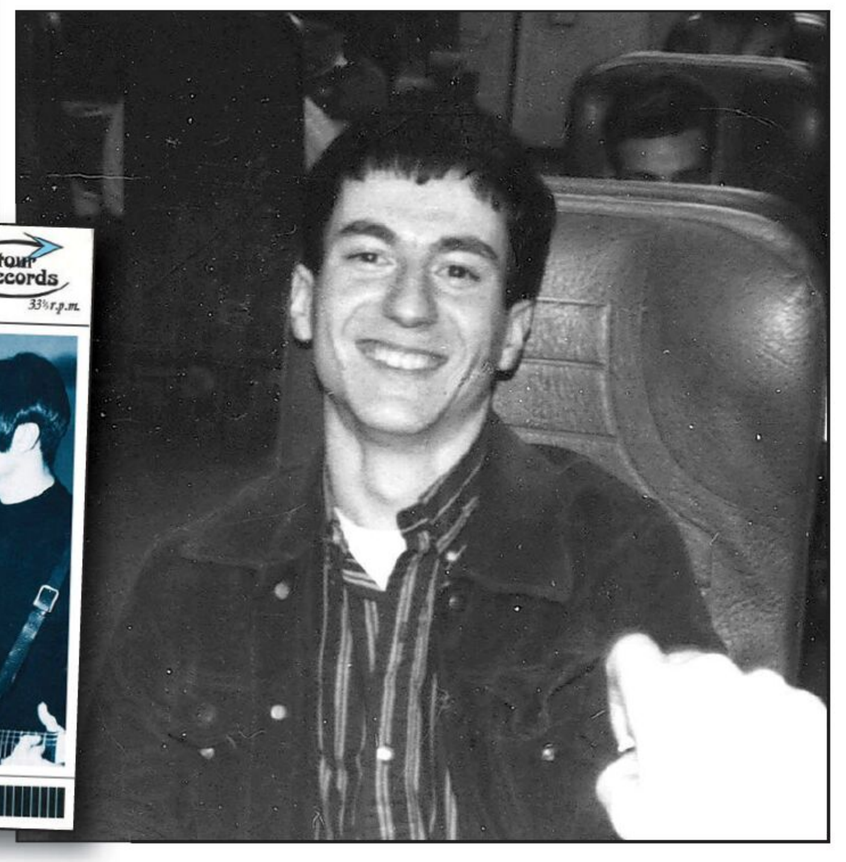
THE CLIQUE burned brightly during the international mod scene of the '90s, developing from R&B purism to freakbeat and psychedelia as members came and went. As a boxed retrospective hits the shops, **ANDY LEWIS** reconnects band members and scene makers on a trip that takes in national radio exposure, brushes with success, violent riots, a van called Camelot and the quest for authenticity.

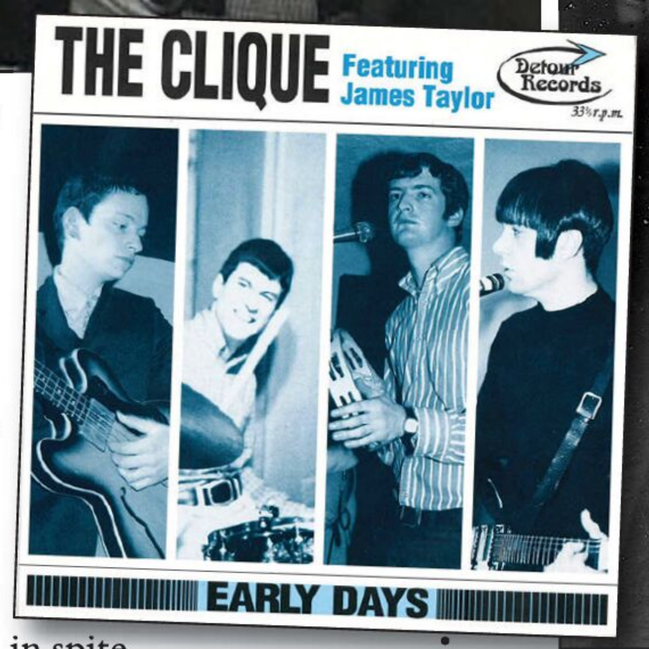
Portrait by FRANK NOON

"We were busy enjoying life. We at times forgot we had gigs!" The Clique, 1992 model. L-R: Phil Otto, Matthew Braim, Trevor French, Dom Strickland, Jon-Paul Harper

Nothing arrives fully formed nor rises without trace. In 1985, Nick Aghadiuno, Andy Toski, Paul Newman, Phil Otto and Kevin Archer had all met at one of the earliest and best mod R&B clubs , Sneakers, where the deejay was a sharp-suited geezer called Paul Hallam. "Paul [Newman] had an idea to form a band made up of people active on the mod scene, rather than trying to get 'ordinary' musicians to play the kind of music he liked," says Hallam, still sporting a tailored jacket, cashmere polo neck sweater, smart jeans and excellent shoes. "With Nick on drums, Andy T singing, Paul and Kevin on guitars and Phil on bass, they got together as The Jukes." At Hallam's suggestion the quartet embarked on learning a set of mod and R&B numbers that would've been on any respectable band's playlist back in '64. "I think the very first song we played was 'Louie Louie'," recalls Phil Otto. "I mean you can't go wrong with that song… although we tried!" Otto had learned the trombone as a boy at school. He'd discovered mod, like so many, through The Jam and Madness, with a friend suggesting he might like The Small Faces. "From then on I went on a path of discovery with great bands like The Spencer Davis Group and The Yardbirds." Visits to a club at The Regency Suite in East London turned him onto the wider world of mod, blues and R&B sounds released roughly between '58 and '67. "It also introduced me to people that were into the same music and the same fashion."

The Clique Mk I: Paul Newman, Otto, Gilles B Mery, Harper; Otto and Merry, "suave"; the first line-up's sole EP





Forming a band from scratch made up of people who had passion, but not much formal musical training had its difficulties. But Phil Otto did what many people did, and still do. "I learned the basics of the bass by listening to Paul Samwell-Smith of The Yardbirds, especially on *Five Live Yardbirds*. Once you get your head round those rolling bass lines basically everything else in rock is based on that." As a left-hander he found that the price of a proper left-handed bass guitar was out of his reach. "I only had a part-time job at Tesco, so I got hold of a half size right-handed bass and just turned it upside down. Job done for 20 quid!"

Under Paul Hallam's watchful eye, The Jukes begun to master a selection of authentic R&B tunes. "I remember being invited along to an early rehearsal on a grey Sunday afternoon near Olympia with (mod club promoter) Tony Class. The band were amazing considering they had only been at it for a few months. Their attention to detail with the R&B standards was amazing!" But even at this early stage, the signs of a more musically adventurous future were there. "My only dislike was their cover of 'Stroll On' by The Yardbirds, which I thought a little too noisy for my taste."

In spite of Hallam's reservations about a song from '66 seeping in, The Jukes were a popular addition to mod events around the country and into Europe for about 18 months. Just like the original mod club bands of the early '60s, some in the band had begun to find the songs they were expected to perform a bit constraining. Even Hallam had to concede "they were eager to explore the mid-60s powerpop and freakbeat sound". So towards the beginning of '88, Paul Newman, Phil Otto and Kevin Archer "decided to chart their own course" and hit upon the perfect name for their new musical adventure – The Clique. Like the material in their repertoire, the name turned out to be borrowed from a band working in the '60s, but in '88 it was a lot harder to check if your moniker had already been taken. A desperately obscure act on Pye Records, the '60s Clique may well have been totally unknown to them at the time, in spite of ploughing a similar musical furrow a quarter of a century earlier.

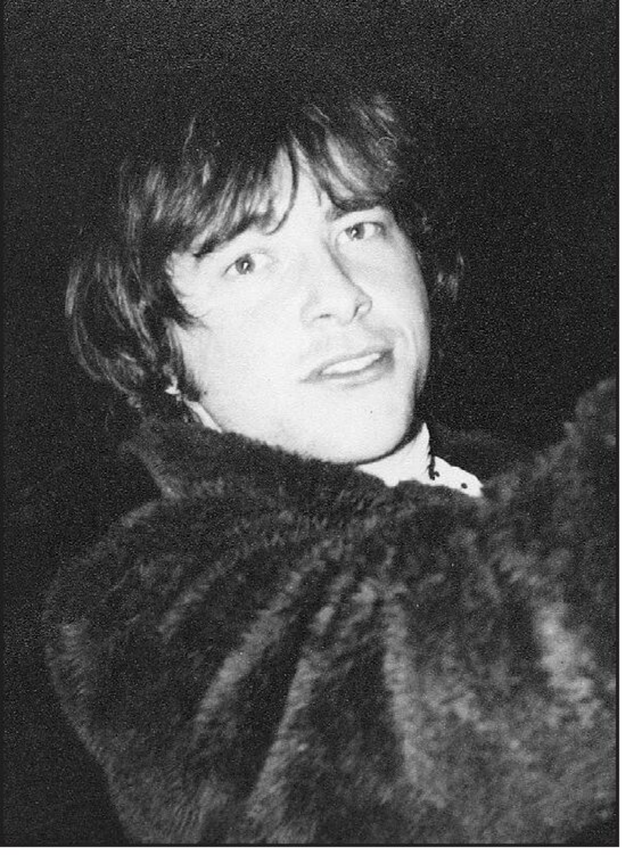
They had a name. Now all they needed was a drummer. Enter Gilles Baillarguet, or Gilles B Mery as he became known, an incredibly suave French '60s enthusiast recently arrived in London. Mery's arrival coincided with Kevin Archer's departure. An early gig as The Clique at London's Rock Garden club on 7th June '88 was performed as a three-piece, with Paul Newman on guitar as well as vocals. However, it wasn't long before they'd recruited Jon-Paul Harper, a few years younger but known to Paul and Phil from their school days. His virtuosity on the guitar moved everything up a gear.

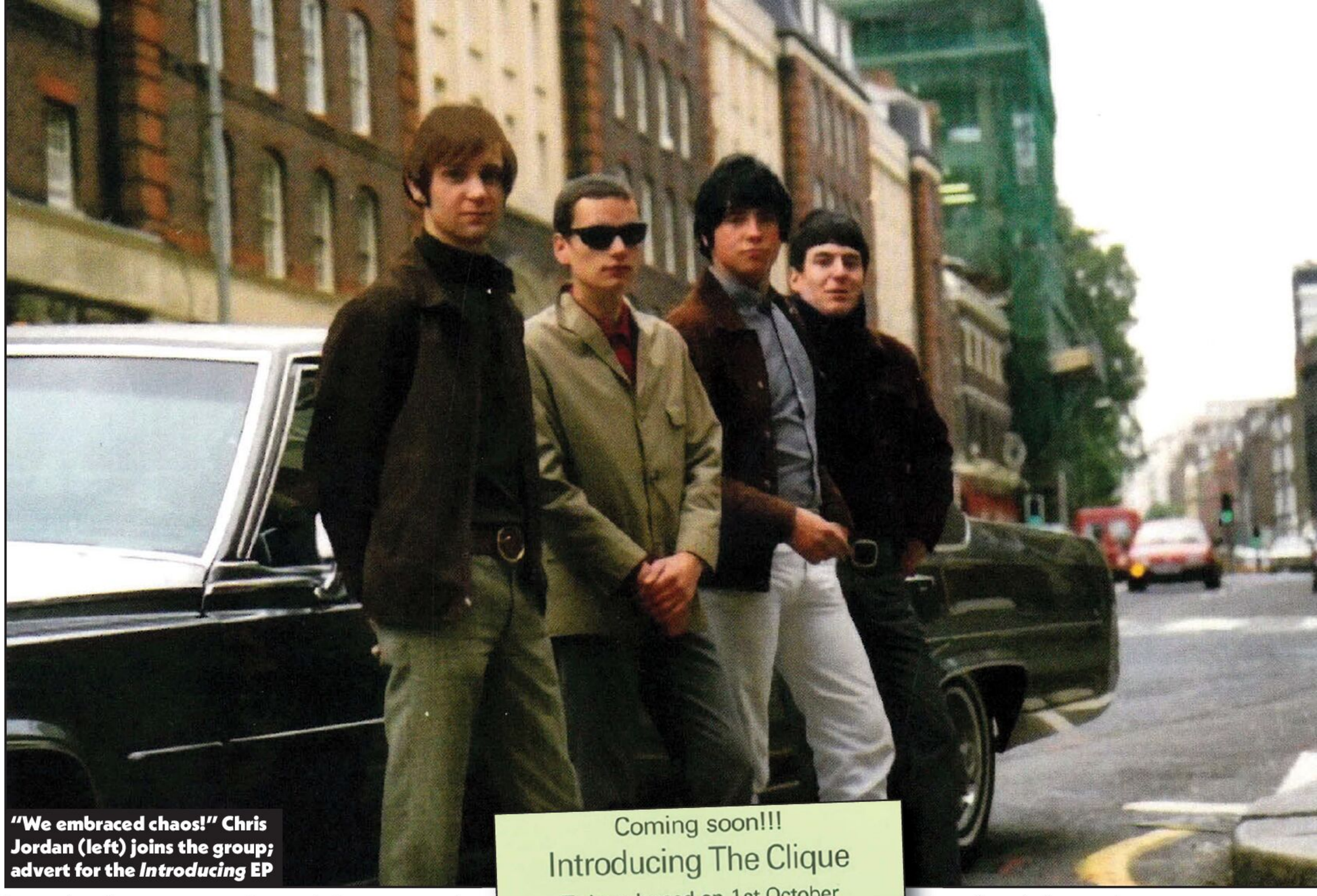
A couple of weeks later, The Clique played their first gig as a four-piece at Jools Cellar Bar on the Edgware Road, and in the words of a member of the audience, "blew the crowd away with their set of obscure beat, blues and R&B covers, including 'Say Those Magic Words', 'Sookie Sookie' and 'Young Man Blues'". They very quickly acquired a reputation as one of the most exciting bands on the scene, playing gigs across London and all over the country. Future mod scene promoter Rob Bailey recalls their impact. "This was the first band us young mods could identify with who looked and sounded authentic – just like The High Numbers." It was at this point they played Blackpool Winter Gardens, a gig Phil Otto remembers as "one of my favourites. I also enjoyed The Lemon Tree in Scarborough, The Ocean Room in Gorleston… Oh they were all good, even the bad ones! We had so much fun."

What might have been potentially one of the bad ones, a journey to Blankenberge in Belgium marred by missed trains, wrong directions and the unprepossessing sight of a down-at-heel seaside town firmly shut when they arrived at 6am, became one of the best gigs they'd played so far, and led to a series of return visits – of which more later.

Meanwhile, back in the UK, things were beginning to get interesting. They acquired a part time manager, Guy Joseph. He introduced the band to Eddie Piller, whose star as an A&R man and record label impresario was very much on the rise. Piller had signed Hammond organist James Taylor to his Re-Elect The President

"I learned the basics of the bass by listening to Paul Samwell-Smith of The Yardbirds, especially on *Five Live Yardbirds*. Once you get your head round those rolling bass lines basically everything else in rock is based on that"
PHIL OTTO





"We embraced chaos!" Chris Jordan (left) joins the group; advert for the *Introducing* EP

label in '87, and The James Taylor Quartet became another of the bands on the mid-80s mod scene that had looked back to the sounds of R&B and beat to inspire their hard-hitting instrumental jazz. By late '88 though, they had expanded their line-up and caught the rising tide of interest in early '70s rare grooves and what became known as Acid Jazz, releasing a version of the *Starsky And Hutch* theme that was selling by the thousand and allowing them to headline some pretty big venues. However, Piller's roots were very much in the same scene as The Clique's. He too had been a regular at The Regency and saw an opportunity to give a band he liked a bit of a leg-up. A joint recording session with James Taylor and The Clique was arranged to lay down an initial four tracks, as Phil Otto recalls. "Eddie had arranged a studio in West London and for James to come along for a day, but we had a technical problem for four hours, so this is why the organ is just on half of the tracks." Despite this setback, one of the tracks, a groovy instrumental number called 'Wormin'', an organ-heavy track that sounded like Wynder K Frog jamming around the riff from 'Sookie Sookie', was released on the second of Acid Jazz Records' *Totally Wired* compilation albums, the first Clique cut to make it to vinyl.

This connection led to one of The Clique's biggest shows to date, opening for The James Taylor Quartet at London's Town & Country Club on 13th May '89 on a bill that included electro-soul outfit Soho and deejay Gilles Peterson. Phil Otto felt a little intimidated by the change of scale. "I remember walking on to the stage and thinking, 'The stage is as big as most of the clubs we play in!'"

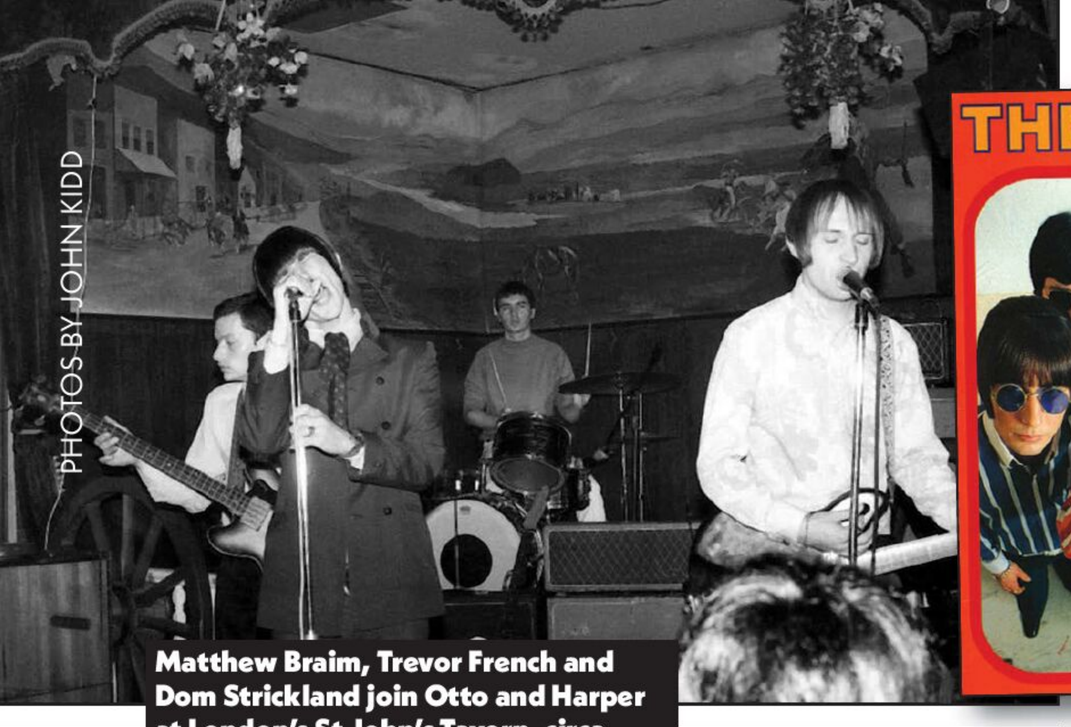
He needn't have worried as the band reportedly "went down a storm". There were enough of the "broad church of mod" present at the gig to appreciate what The Clique were about and how they fitted into the line-up that night. But times were definitely a-changin'. The mainstream music papers were starting to feature bands who had taken elements of '60s beat and mixed it with contemporary indie and dance sounds. As Phil was measuring up the stage at the T&C, there were people listening, rapt, to the first Stone Roses album which had come out the week before. More than that, some of the hardest-core mods on the old Sneakers scene were now wearing love beads and Duffer Of St George clobber and exploring a wider sonic palette.

Not everyone felt happy with the way things were going. Perhaps singer Paul Newman didn't feel comfortable being seen to be moving further away from the beat, blues and R&B that were his great love. These days he curates The Sonny Daze Blues Dance & Soul Show on Soundcloud, an exquisite blend of the best of the vinyl in his collection, which hints at the depth of his passion for these sounds. Back in August '89, shortly after the T&C show, following a gig at the wonderful Ocean Room at Gorleston on the 25th, he quit The Clique.

"As soon as Paul Newman said he was leaving, Jon-Paul wanted me in the band," second vocalist Chris Jordan explains. "He knew I knew the songs, and that I had the kind of energy he felt would be good for them." Jordan had been a fan of The Clique and had seen them several times. "They were shit hot! Them and The Aardvarks were the only bands doing it with any style." Another stalwart of the mid-80s '60s scene, Jordan's take on it was slightly different. "When I was at school I liked a bit of punk stuff but soon discovered the '60s garage sound thanks to the *Nuggets* and *Pebbles* compilations. The Pretty Things became one of my favourite bands; Phil May became my absolute hero." His experience of clubland was different too. "I went a lot to a psychedelic beat night run by Alan Milliner called Circles, and also Alice In Wonderland at Gossips in Meard Street – I got filmed down there for some Italian documentary about the London club scene." Even so, he still embraced elements of the "traditional" mod style. "I wasn't into the more 'paisley' stuff. I preferred a kind of Small Faces psych vibe."

Jordan's arrival as singer wasn't initially a harbinger of great change but didn't pass unnoticed by some of the crowd. "All I'd get at gigs was 'GET YER HAIR CUT!'," he laughs. Gradually he began to suggest songs to add to the set. "The mod thing is great but how many soul covers can you do? The '66/67 era was more my thing. You can only go so far with the pure '65 sound. I thought about how The Yardbirds changed. I was trying to get The Clique to do that. After all, Jon-Paul's favourite guitarist was Jimi Hendrix and so he was up for that kind of change too." Two of the songs they started doing, 'It's My Pride' by The Guess Who and 'I'm Gonna Make You Mine' by The Shadows Of Knight, were indicative of Jordan's ambition for the band. "I really put a lot into it and I wanted to change things and be myself, not just a Mick Jagger soundalike."

More significantly, Jordan could write songs. Two of his compositions feature on what became the band's first standalone release, the *Introducing The Clique* EP, released on Harper's own label Guild



PHOTOS BY JOHN KIDD

Matthew Braim, Trevor French and Dom Strickland join Otto and Harper at London's St John's Tavern, circa 1992; the group's belated debut single

Records in '91. 'Where Did I Go Wrong' and 'The Whole Night Through' fit perfectly alongside a live staple, their version of 'Looking Back', and a daring attempt at The Longboatmen's blistering freakbeat classic 'Take Her Any Time'. "You can hear how live the recordings were," says Phil Otto, referring to the studio chat prominent at the beginning of the recording of 'The Whole Night Through' included on *Preservation Society*. Keeping things as live as possible in the studio got around some of the issues Jordan had been worried about. "In the '80s and early '90s, a lot of studios had too much technology. Everything got gated and the sound ended up quite thin and clean and disappointing." This quest for audio authenticity was to become a big part of The Clique's musical journey.

The EP's sleeve, the four of them caught on camera hanging tough in front of Big Ben in a perfect nod to The Who's influence, felt, like the music, authentic and totally irony-free. These were still pre-Britpop, pre-*Austin Powers* days, when the symbols of pop culture's past were still the property of a knowledgeable few.

It was fiercely expensive to record and release records without a label putting money into the project, so it really paid off that The Clique were a popular live act, even if the shows themselves were often chaotic affairs. "We embraced chaos!" remembers Chris Jordan. "We instigated it! I could never do anything normal. I loved waving my mic stand around and rolling on the floor. I remember one gig in Blackpool when JP got hold of a load of feathers and started chucking them into the audience. Unfortunately, after playing his guitar with it, he also managed to throw his mic stand at Phil, who was not best pleased, I can tell you." Phil well remembers that the logistics of getting from place to place had their own challenges too. "We were always getting lost. No sat nav in those days. We were also, as a band, busy enjoying life. We at times forgot we had gigs!" They had a loyal fan base who would often organise coach trips to events that were further afield. It guaranteed a good crowd which often led promoters to organise repeat bookings.

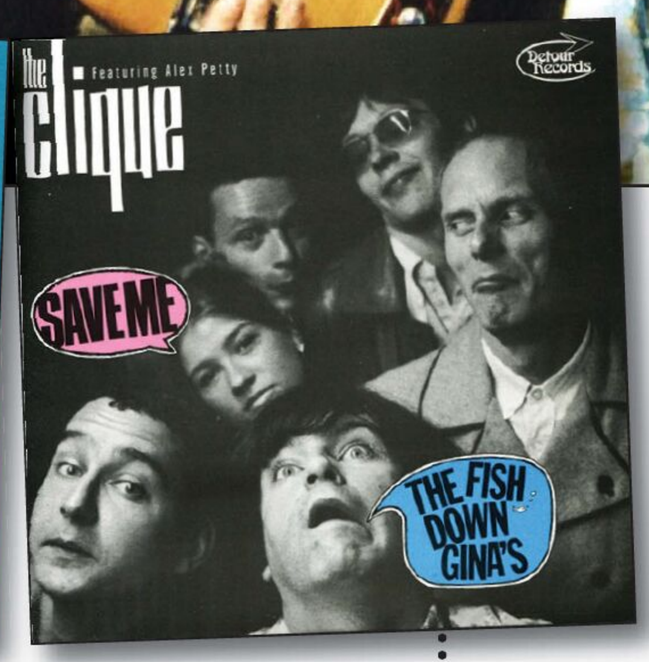
One such excursion was to accompany a return to Blankenberge. Their third visit in as many years, The Clique had played an excellent set and had gone down well. After the show, trouble started when some skinheads crashed the venue and began to cut up rough. An eyewitness to what rapidly escalated into a full-blown riot describes the carnage. "Lots of the English crowd, including Phil from the band, were hit from behind with large glass ashtrays, people were thrown into the sea, record boxes were stolen in the mayhem, there was gunfire outside, and the venue was smashed to bits." "What the fuck?" thought Chris as his hotel room rapidly turned into a makeshift casualty clearing station. "I'd gone back after the show to hang out in my room when people started turning up with cuts and bruises, black eyes, heads split open, needing somewhere to patch themselves up. My sink was red with blood!" There were many stitched heads and arms in slings on the coach home.

Not long after the Blankenberge debacle, Chris Jordan decided to leave, although the Belgian brawl wasn't a factor in his decision to go. By the late summer of '91, it seemed London was awash with snarling, bratty garage-rock, surf, beat, rockabilly and psychedelic bands, cracking the boards at venues like Camden's Dublin Castle and the astonishing Western Room at Archway's St John's Tavern. Some of them were members of the Medway/Billy Childish nexus. Others had drifted there from late '80s indie bands. A few had been on the mod scene but were moving on. The Clique felt sort of part of it, but sort of not. "It was Gary from The Aardvarks saying our music was just cabaret for mods," Jordan explained. "That brought it home to me how we were just playing the same old rallies and clubs on the scene. It was too restrictive. I wanted to go properly down the psych route, wig out a bit. But they couldn't jam unless it sounded like 'Sookie Sookie!'"

"You can only go so far with the pure 1965 sound. I thought about how The Yardbirds changed. I was trying to get The Clique to do that. Jon-Paul's favourite guitarist was Jimi Hendrix and so he was up for that kind of change too"
CHRIS JORDAN

Once again, The Clique needed a new singer. Having worked occasionally with Vox Continental player Jake Lingwood, Jon-Paul, Gilles and Phil reckoned a permanent organist would also be a useful addition to the sound. Trevor French and Dom Strickland were Clique gig regulars and had been trying to start a band of their own. Knowing they could sing and play, and assuming as fans that they knew all the songs, they were invited in. Dom's flat became a rehearsal venue, possibly because it was easier to go there than to get his Hammond

Harper channels his inner Hendrix; Pete 'Speed' Wild, Bruce Brand and guest vocalist Alex Petty join the fray in 1995; the eventual album and 45



organ anywhere else. Their first appearance with their new members was as a last-minute replacement for The Prime Movers, a band that was both part of the Medway nexus *and* mods who'd moved on, at St John's Tavern on 1st October '91.

No sooner had this new line-up stabilised and settled into the routine of gigging, it was dealt a blow when Gilles Baillarguet announced he was returning to France. Ironically, his replacement had not long returned from France, where he'd been studying. Matthew Braim had been in the audience at a mod rally in Yarmouth when he'd first seen The Clique but had been unimpressed by their drummer. "They were amazing, but all I could think was, 'I can play better than him.' Also, I'd noticed the reaction, especially from girls, for the band. I resolved to join this band, if I could!" Braim made his debut with The Clique at the Hastings mod rally of Easter '92. The changes in the band hadn't stopped with the drummer. For one thing, there was a good deal more self-penned material as the band began to bounce songwriting ideas off each other.

In an attempt to alleviate some of the touring chaos, Dom Strickland decided that the band needed a vehicle that was big enough for them, their equipment, and anyone else who wanted to tag along. A former Kent County Council ambulance was procured, and christened Camelot. Why Camelot? "'Tis a silly place!", giggled Phil Otto. Camelot was soon being prepared for a trip to Italy, where it chugged slowly but steadily over the Alps and around a succession of successful gigs.

As well as building an audience across Europe, The Clique were becoming a popular attraction on the London garage-rock revival circuit as their original compositions got better and their sound toughened up. They had come to the attention of Detour Records, one of the labels issuing discs by the assortment of bands that populated the scene. Detour paid for a recording session at Rogue Studios; the result was their first single release. 'Reggie' is a Small Faces-esque cautionary tale of magic mushroom abuse, while 'She Doesn't Need You Any More' is a brass-led belter aimed fairly and squarely at the dancefloors of the proto-Britpop club scene that was starting to gather momentum. Phil's childhood trombone lessons finally proved their worth, as he recalls. "Jon-Paul… had strong ideas for that song and invited some brass players from Medway. I just happened to have a trombone to hand and played a couple of notes to fill the sound. You'll need a good ear to hear it!"

"Spare a thought for those at Detour, who spend their *entire lives* celebrating all things Sta-Prest-ish," announced the *NME*, reviewing the single in March '95, by which time the sound and look of Britpop was everywhere. Since '93, when the Blow Up club had first opened, mixing elements of the past with the best of the present and dressing up in sharper threads had become the in-thing once again. "I loved Blow Up, when I went," recalls Otto. "I loved the new enthusiasm injected into the scene." There were bandwagon-jumpers galore, but what set The Clique apart from many of their contemporaries wasn't only "the Foundations-like stomp and blinding orange shirts" that the *NME* picked up on, but the vintage feel of their recordings.

One of the people who'd been attracted to The Clique and their quest for sonic authenticity was Bruce Brand. A veteran of the Medway set, he'd been heavily involved with Billy Childish, a man who would never take the easy road if it meant compromising his strict principles. Brand had become The Clique's mentor and part time manager, and with his wealth of musical experience had started producing them too. Their second single, 'Bareback Donkey Riding', sounded even better than their first, due in part to Brand's input but mostly because of the choice of studio. Toe Rag had been started by Liam Watson, an audio engineer keen on the sounds and techniques of the '50s and '60s. It had quickly become the go-to studio for the St John's Tavern crowd, partly because it was cheap, but mostly because Watson actively encouraged the kind of looseness of sound and liveness of performance that made old records exciting. Bruce Brand knew it would suit The Clique to a tee.

Detour was well pleased with sales of the singles, so commissioned the band's first proper album. Sessions began at Rogue Studios but soon hit a snag when flamboyant guitarist Jon-Paul quit. When asked the reason for his sudden departure,

The final run. Strickland, Newman, Otto, French, Harper, Petty and Brand reunite for 'Hello Sunshine' in 1998

Phil Otto replied, "You will need to ask him. People move on I suppose." Matt Braim hinted at personality clashes and frequent drunken outbursts of "I'm the only real musician in this band." Harper's guitar skills had been a major factor in the band's appeal, but what happened next had unexpected benefits, as Otto describes. "Bruce Brand was managing us at the time and, unbeknown to me, he could play the guitar. I only knew him as a drummer. He knew the songs and it was, well, not exactly easy, for him to jump in on guitar…" But jump in he did.

Deciding to start the album afresh, The Clique and Brand returned to Toe Rag, where they had the whole thing recorded in a week. "That's all we had the money for," confessed Otto, "but in the end it turned out alright." More than alright. *Self Preservation Society* became Detour's biggest selling album. The songs and the sound take the listener on a trip sideways in time, a record from the mid-90s that echoed the musical journeys taken by bands 30 years previously. Listen to 'Ropey Old Boat' (aka 'I Can See Waves'). It's as though Plastic Penny were performing on *TFI Friday*.

With an album that good, and with gigs still coming thick and fast, it was inevitable that a larger label would come looking for a piece of the action. Having heard a copy of the LP, One Little Indian started sniffing around. According to Phil Otto, "One of their A&R guys had seen a gig some years back and contacted us. It would've been better for us if it had been a few years earlier as I believe what they wanted was the then line-up." Nonetheless, it led to a kaleidoscope whirl of meetings, drinks, memos, advances, freebies, parties, more meetings, demo sessions, more drinks. With a contract almost ready to sign, rising costs associated with the recording of Bjork's next album and the fallout from a barcode blunder that saw a Skunk Anansie single miss out on a place in the charts, put all new signings on hold. The deal was off.

Self Preservation Society had an important champion in radio deejay Mark Lamarr, who had made it his Album Of The Week, and arranged for them to do a session for the BBC. Unfortunately, by the time the session was due to be recorded, singer Trevor French had stood down, dismayed by the collapse of the One Little Indian deal. Another old face from the mod scene, Pete 'Speed' Wild, stepped up to take his place in Camelot for the eight-hour round trip to the session. Listening to 'Tortoise', it didn't sound like a band who'd been on the road all day with a relatively new frontman. A live act on Radio One never sounded so forcefully in command of the studio.

There were more gigs, contributions to a Kinks tribute album, and another trip to Toe Rag for a sensational version of 'Save Me' featuring female vocalist Alex Petty on lead vocals. The end, however, was nigh. Just time for a final flourish in the shape of 'Hello Sunshine', recorded with the last of One Little Indian's money. In a gesture acknowledging that this was indeed the end, it featured just about everyone who'd been involved with The Clique's line-up, though as Phil Otto points out, "We were never all in the studio at the same time, the past members put their own bits on later."

'Hello Sunshine' was released in '98, by which time The Clique had dissolved. Almost a quarter of a century on, the new Detour Records collection *Preservation Society* gathers and presents to a 21st century world a collection of recordings that are at once both a relic of a bygone era and fresh inspiration to anyone seeking a route to musical enlightenment. Their message of "start basic, get better, go weird" is as relevant today as it was in '64, or will be in 2064. S!

Preservation Society is out now on Detour

"I'd gone back after the show to hang out in my room when people started turning up with cuts and bruises, black eyes, heads split open, needing somewhere to patch themselves up. My sink was red with blood!"
CHRIS JORDAN

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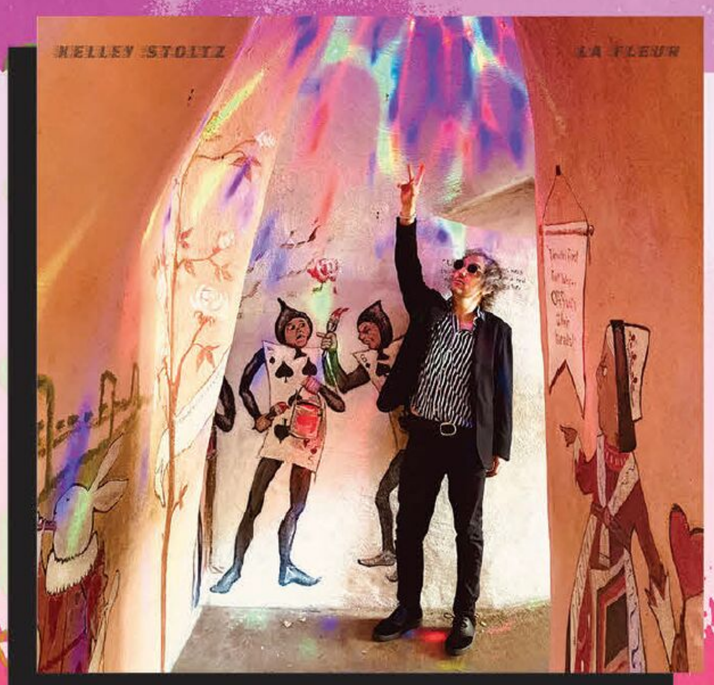

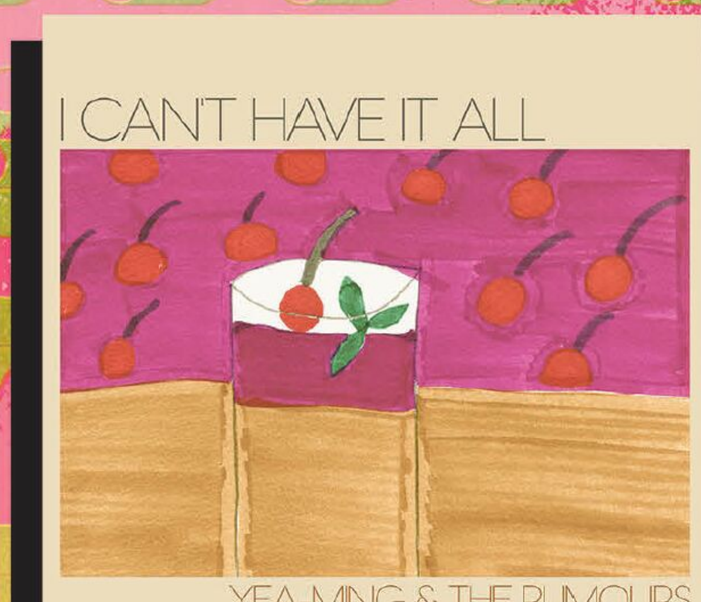

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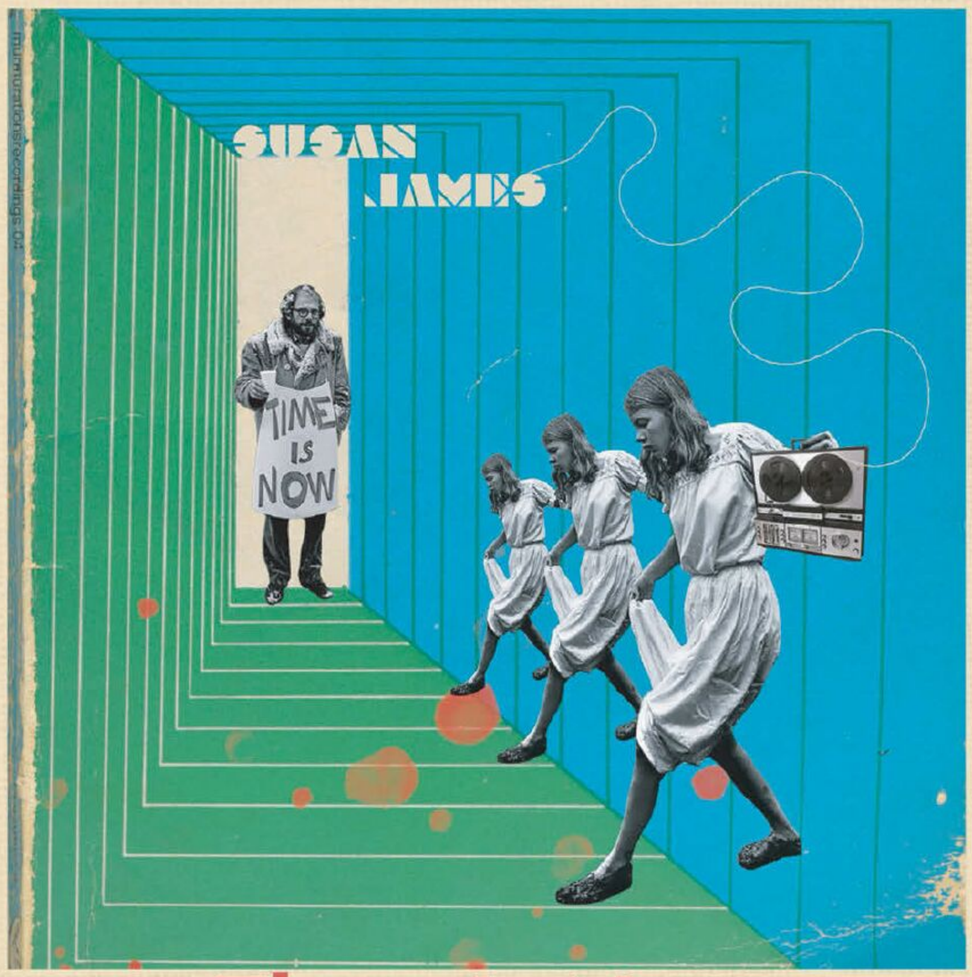

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Some Misunderst

"You could call this is an important transition for me." Gene Clark shelters from the heat, 1974

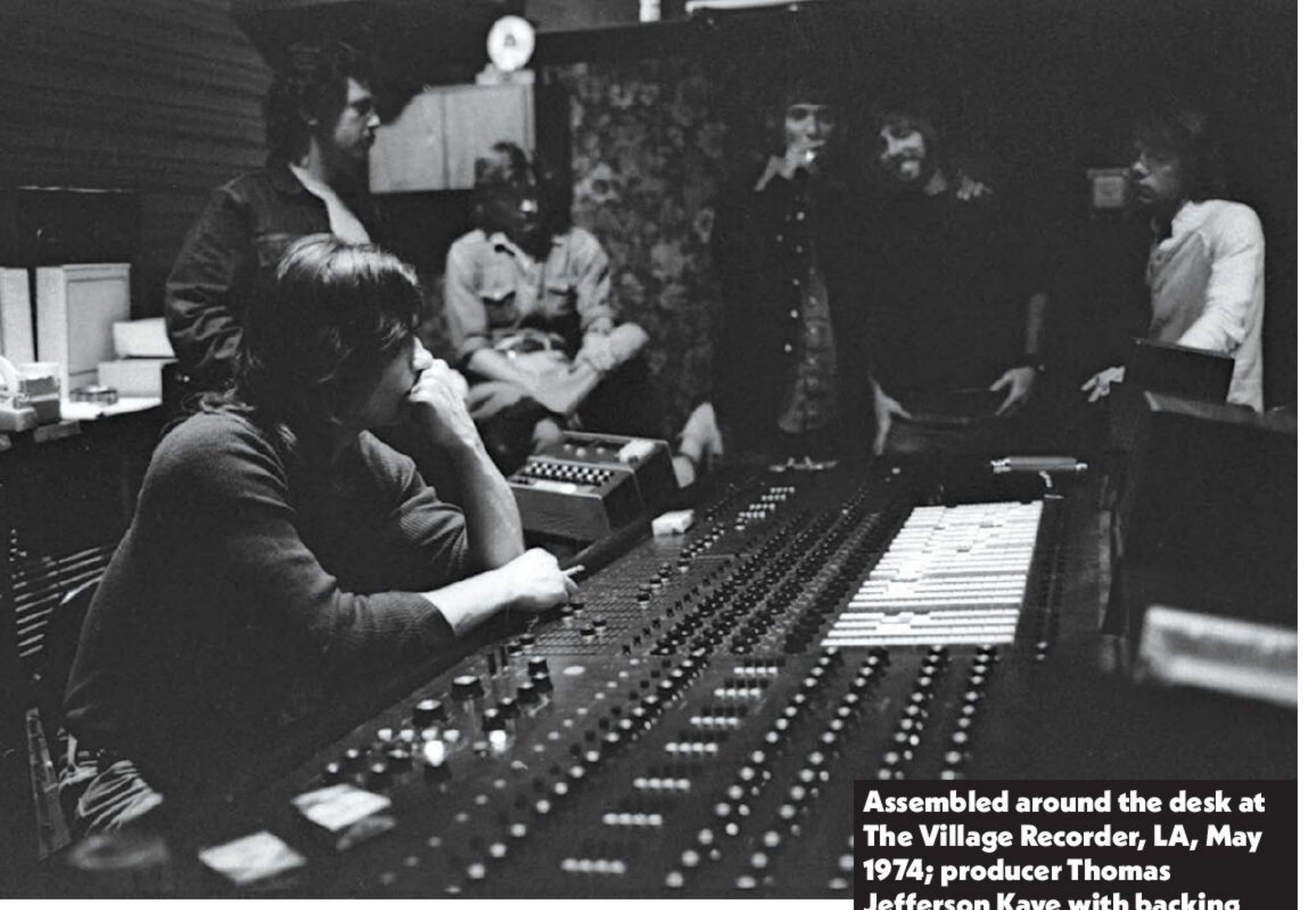
RSTANDING

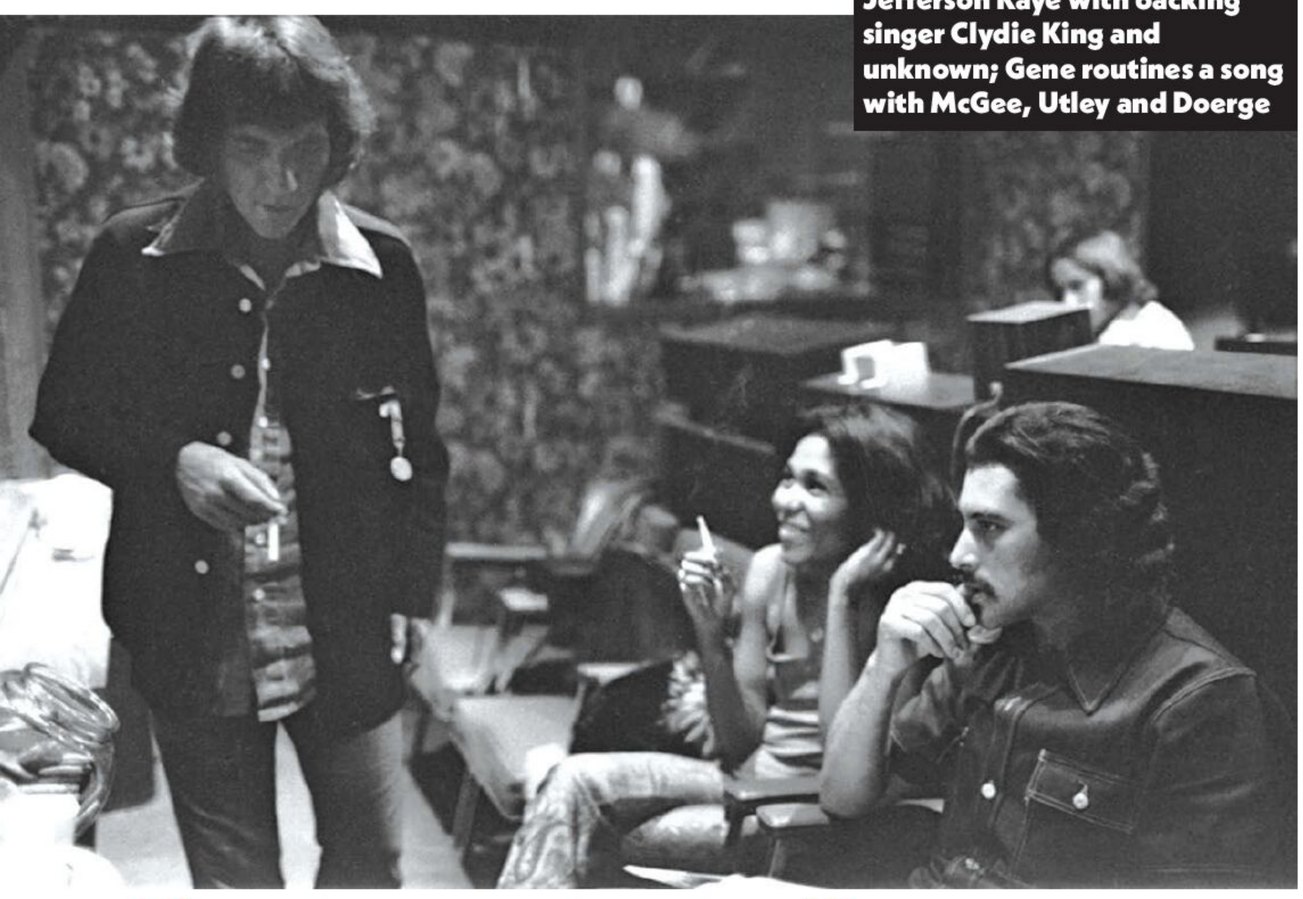
It's 50 candles on the cake for GENE CLARK*'s seminal cosmic masterpiece* NO OTHER. MARTIN RUDDOCK *investigates why it immediately went missing in action, and celebrates its rich legacy with a host of admirers*

The more you live with Gene Clark's 1974 album *No Other*, the more questions you'll ask. A prized touchstone for us Shindiggers, the album's genesis has already been covered admirably in these pages by Johnnie Johnstone's Family Album feature back in *S!* #97, but there are always myths to bust – like claims of unfinished additional tracks (two pleasant, but not sky-kissing versions of 'Train Leaves Here This Morning' remain the sole "new" cuts to emerge). There are whispers of the sessions being drug-addled chaos (possibly not, but we'll get to that). What exactly is a 'Silver Raven', a mystic bird, a UFO, or one of Clark's then-wife Carlie's fancy shoes? (The answer: possibly all three.) Exactly how many layers of swampy fuzz bass did Lee Sklar put down on the eerie space-funk title track? Was Gene having a bit of an alliterative giggle with "Said she saw the sword of sorrow sunken in the sand of searching souls"?

Even the question of how *No Other* failed so spectacularly in 1974 is multiple choice. Was it a lack of sales, airplay or promotion? Was it too spiritual and cosmically inclined to connect with an America up to its eyes in Watergate and Quaaludes? Was it Clark's provocative cover outfit and fetching make-up? Or all the above?

To understand some aspects of *No Other*'s legacy, now and then, we need to take a Silver Raven's beak to some of its enduring myths – as they often shape how we see it, sometimes hear it. Because it was so hard to get hold of for decades, we've often treated it almost as an unreleased, abandoned album like The Beach Boys' *SMiLE*. It was always here, even if you had to hunt it down. But because of Gene's occasional claims of unfinished extra material and the sharp decline in his personal life and career after *No Other*, those comparisons become inevitable.





Assembled around the desk at The Village Recorder, LA, May 1974; producer Thomas Jefferson Kaye with backing singer Clydie King and unknown; Gene routines a song with McGee, Utley and Doerge

"You put two bulls in a pen and they horn each other for half an hour then they say, 'Okay man, you're a stud too'"

Gene Clark on Thomas Jefferson Kaye

I Used To Treat My Friends Like I Was More Than A Millionaire

As canyon-rock peaked, was *No Other* just too expensive and uncommercial to break even? To the ears of Asylum boss David Geffen, it was an expensive production number with dense, impenetrable zen-influenced lyrics that he couldn't figure out how to sell to Eagles fans. Reportedly furious at spending almost $100,000 on an eight-song album, Geffen almost immediately washed his hands of his investment. A persistent story has an angry Clark kicked off Asylum in '75 after lashing out at his label boss at West Hollywood watering hole Dan Tana's in frustration. Geffen denied this to the *LA Times* in 2019, but the truth about Clark's exit from Asylum and the album's quick deletion might be more complicated. It's often said that that producer Thomas Jefferson Kaye spent like a sailor on an uncommercial LP as he and Clark toiled at LA's Village Recorders – but it was also the second huge bill Kaye had presented to Geffen in a matter of months. After impressing Geffen with his recent production on Loudon Wainwright's *Album III*, Kaye had been enlisted to produce songwriter, scenester and former Dylan right-hand man Bob Neuwirth in late '73.

Neuwirth's signing apparently resulted from Geffen betting with former Dylan's former manager Albert Grossman that he could make the elusive Neuwirth finish an LP. The final cost for *Bob Neuwirth* came in at about $200,000, and after a lot of window-smashing, hard-living craziness. During mixing, a wired Neuwirth dragged Kaye to see a drowsy Geffen at 9am one day to discuss his album photoshoot concept, demanding tailor-made wool suits to be made for some fish – but Geffen was tickled. "I don't know if it's a work of art or what it is, but you really have done something," the weary label head told Kaye. "This album has cost me a fortune to make, and do you know how many records I'll sell? Maybe six. That's how I feel about it. That's how excited I am about this Bobby Neuwirth record."

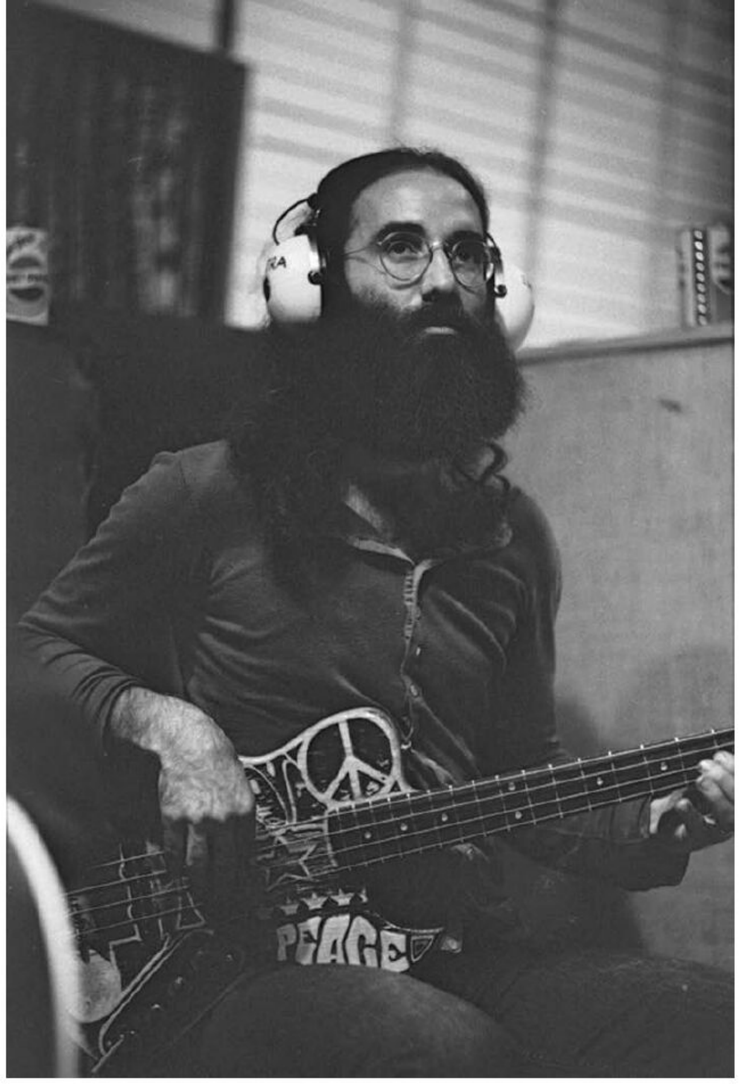
It was a very different response around six months later when Kaye delivered *No Other*. "David took the record out of the sleeve and counted the bands, and he looked at me, and said 'There are only eight songs on this record? It cost $92,000 to make!', and he just threw the record down on his desk," he told Paul Kendall for *ZigZag* in '77.

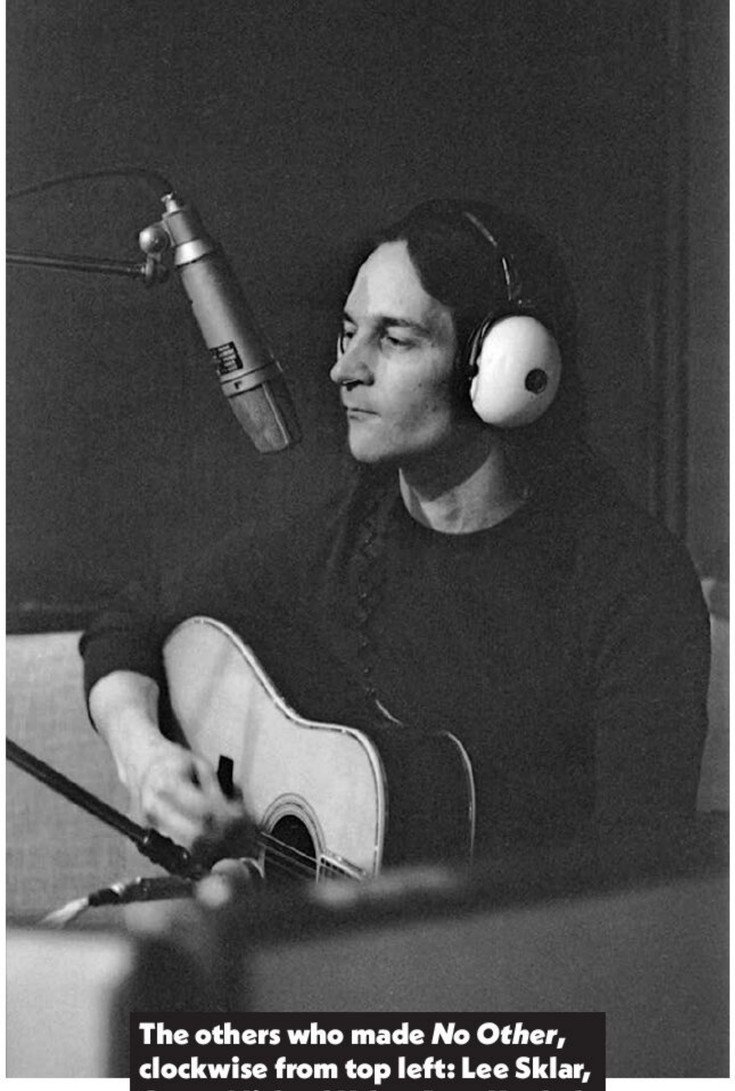
Bob Neuwirth shares some of *No Other*'s lush sonic palette and illustrious session crew, but is basically a decent, moderately sozzled rock 'n' roll album with a bit of attitude and a glitzy finish. A star-studded melange of guests appear, including Dylan, Don Everly, Dusty Springfield, Cass Elliott, Rita and Priscilla Coolidge, Kris Kristofferson – and an uncredited Gene Clark. "We had one session that was the thrill of my life with all these people singing at the same session," Kaye proudly told veteran rock journo Al Aronowitz in an account of the Neuwirth caper published in '96. "David Geffen says to me, 'If you finish this record like tomorrow, I'll give you another project to do. Anything or anyone you want to do on my label.'"

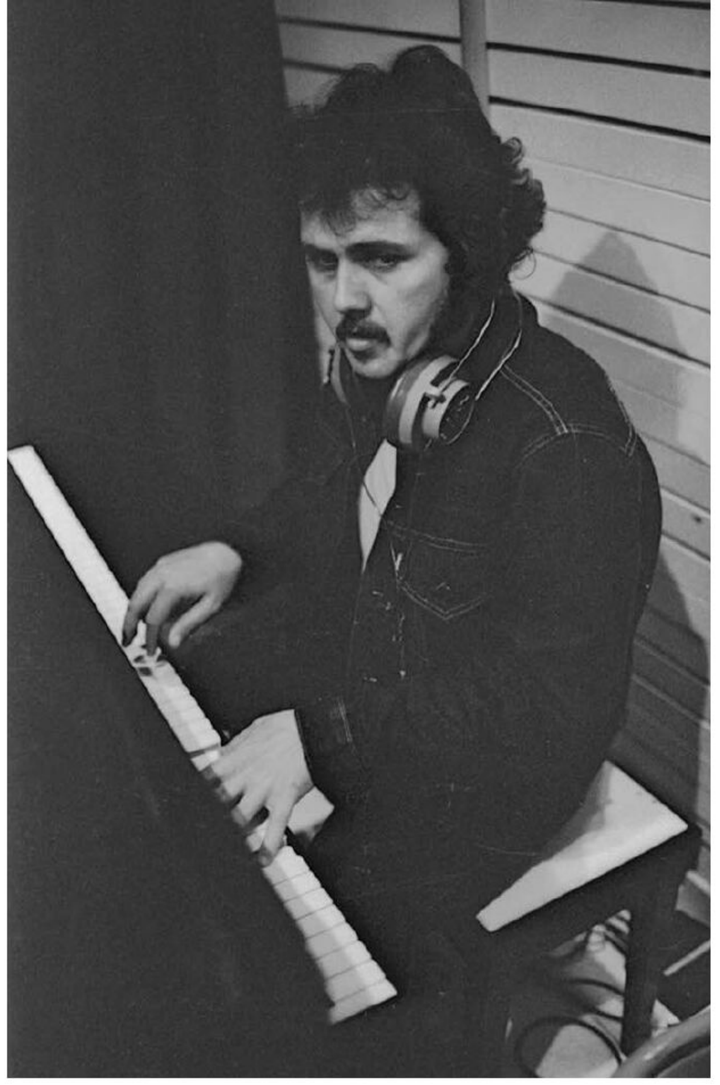
After initially circling each other with outright hostility ("You put two bulls in a pen and they horn each other for half an hour and then they say, 'Okay man, you're a stud too,'" Gene told B Mitchel Reed in a '74 radio interview for *KMET*), Kaye chose Clark, freshly signed to Asylum after the '73 Byrds reunion album. The pair quickly bonded.

Whether Gene roughed Geffen up at Dan Tana's in '75 or not, perhaps his sensible choice to follow his nose artistically and not bring in a star-studded guest cast for *No Other* (bar fellow Byrd Chris Hillman on mandolin) went against him with his celebrity-courting boss. It's sadly most likely that Geffen just wasn't that into Clark or *No Other*.

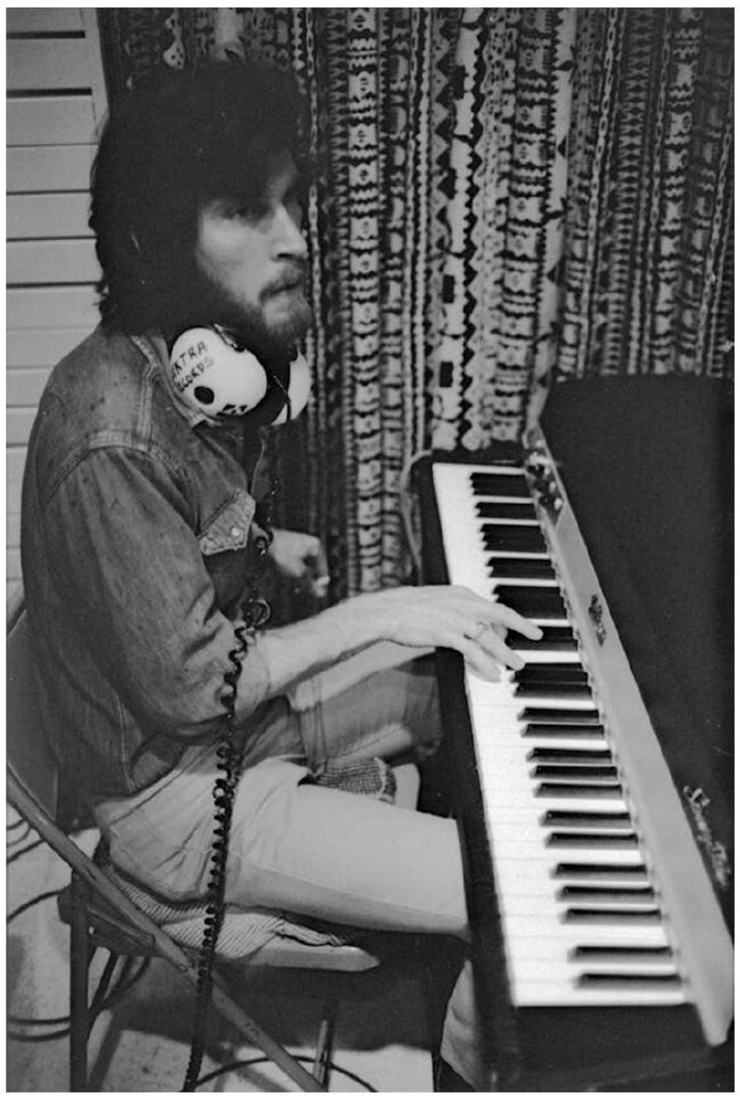
Geffen's ruthless streak often came out with his less commercially successful LPs. Numerous early Asylum releases quickly dropped off catalogue, like David Blue's *Stories* (the first Asylum LP, also eight tracks long), which was deleted in '72, a year after release. Similar fates awaited the debuts by Jo Jo Gunne and Batdorf &

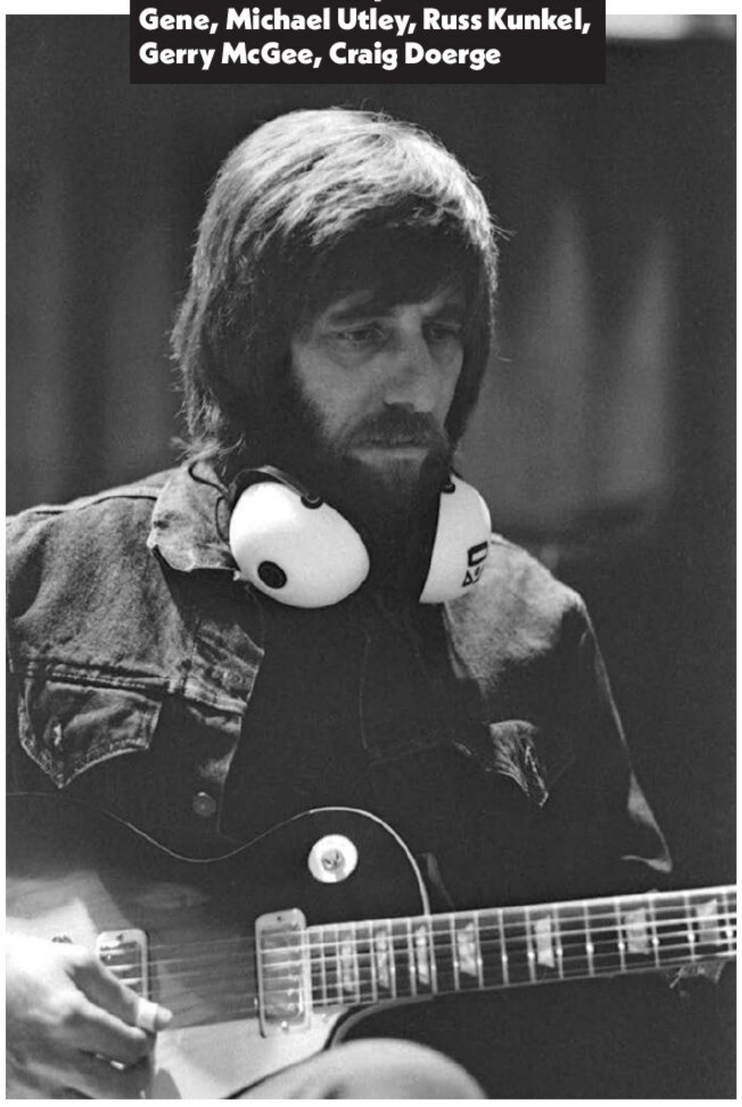


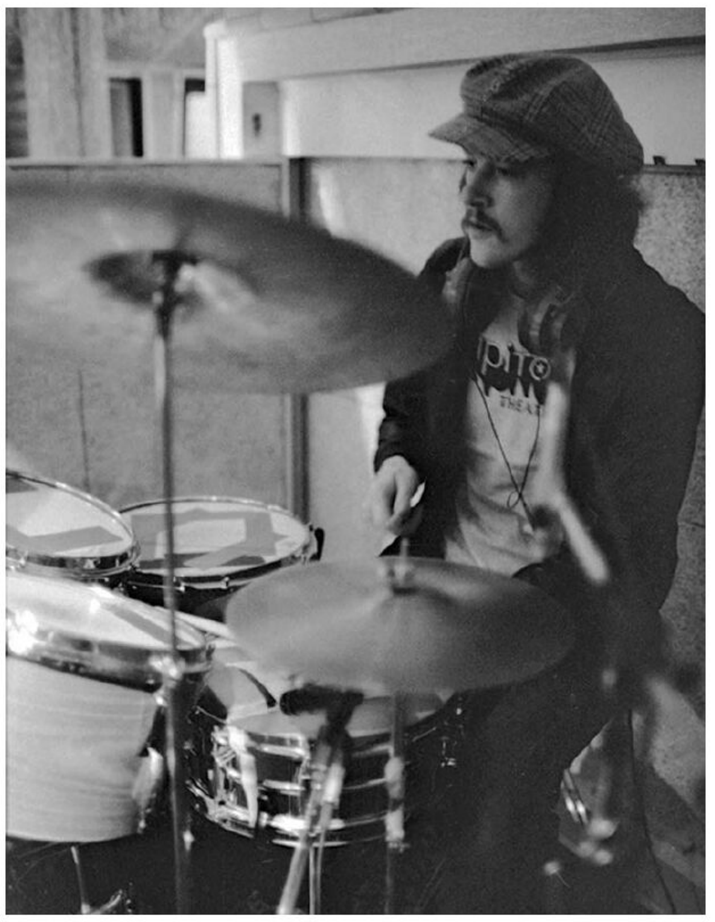




The others who made *No Other*, clockwise from top left: Lee Sklar, Gene, Michael Utley, Russ Kunkel, Gerry McGee, Craig Doerge







Rodney and both albums by Judee Sill. The expensive folly of the Neuwirth album was pretty much shelved the second it hit the racks.

Kaye told Paul Kendall that Gene approached Asylum with some strong new tunes in late '74 that ultimately emerged on '77's *Two Sides To Every Story,* but was shut down. "When they heard them at Asylum, they told Gene that they didn't hear anything. In fact, they thought it was terrible, and that's when they gave him his release." Geffen was receptive to strong sellers like Joni, Jackson Browne, Linda Ronstadt and The Eagles. He just happened to turn a tin ear to *No Other*.

We All Need A Fix At A Time Like This

No Other's reputation has always been both enhanced and dogged by speculation about Gene's chemical habits during its making. It's fair to say that its widescreen, unearthly sound, sometimes meditative, menacing or both has entranced heads for decades. But by all accounts, the sessions were pretty tranquil – apart from a furious Gene flying at a visiting Joe Cocker for disrupting a take. Despite Clark and Kaye's shared tricky relationships with booze and the chemical temptations of LA, they spent long hours hyper-focused, obsessing over detail, honing arrangements, chasing magic takes and trying to nail the tempo of 'Some Misunderstanding'. On *his* album, Neuwirth often sounds slurry and bleary. But the out-takes on 4AD's dazzling 2019 *No Other* box set (see also their recent Record Store Day release of session tracks) show Gene fully in control, singing each take live from the floor.

The epic, soaring 'Lady Of The North' is often called the product of an epic coke binge by Clark and Doug Dillard, but a mutter of "I gotta get it more together," before a take of the tricky 'Strength Of Strings' is about as incriminating as it gets. We can't say what went on after hours. A deflated Gene slid back into bad habits when *No Other* tanked, but you could argue that's effect, rather than cause.

I Am Always High, I Am Always Low: Opinion Through The Ages

Finding out what the public made of *No Other* in 1974 is extremely difficult. The US record biz trade papers made a couple of nods on release, and there's a single (sniffy) known review in the *LA Times*. Here's all the press we could find:

"A magnificent effort."
BILLBOARD, TOP ALBUM PICKS, OCTOBER 1974

"Definitely well-conceived, the LP offers such tasty morsels as 'Life's Greatest Fool', 'From A Silver Phial', 'Some Misunderstanding' and 'Lady Of The North'. A definite positive burst from Mr Clark."
ALBUM REVIEWS / POP PICKS, *CASHBOX,* OCTOBER 1974

"Heavy handed."
REVIEW BY DAVID RENSIN, *LA TIMES,* SEPTEMBER 1974

"…a tremendously imaginative album and a perfect example of Gene's burst of new-found creativity."
PRESS RELEASE FOR UK *NO OTHER* PROMO 45, JANUARY 1975

© JOHN DIETRICH - FROM THE COLLECTION OF WHIN OPPICE

Gene gets a makeover for the album's promotional photos

"I really consider No Other a great album ~ I'm very proud of it. But I was very disappointed that it didn't go any further than it did"

GENE CLARK

Despite limited availability and barely enough column inches to use as roach material, *No Other* quickly gained notoriety among a network of committed Byrds fans – particularly in the UK, where any Byrds-related activity was zealously followed by fans, writers and musicians alike.

The first to preach the gospel of the Silver Raven were the good folk of *ZigZag* magazine, who spoke to an optimistic-sounding Gene in '75. "I have to say I'm pretty happy with the whole thing… You could call this is an important transition for me. I'm moving into another, bigger arena." Byrdmaniax in chief included the questing Johnny Rogan, Pete Frame (whose miniature Rock Family Tree in the gatefold of '73's *History Of The Byrds* did much to keep their flame alive), and Paul Kendall, who eventually spearheaded a third coming of *No Other* through his superb 2013 film *The Byrd Who Flew Alone*.

We spoke to some fans on the scene at the time about how they discovered *No Other*. According to Johnny Rogan, most US copies that landed in England in late '74 were snapped up within hours from hip London import shops. "I did read the UK music press at the time but can't recall seeing an advert for it," says reader/fan George Smith. "I was going to the record shop every weekend in those days. so probably picked it out of the new release bin."

"The last great album from the west coast psych boom?" ponders author and compiler extraordinaire Jon Savage. "Bought US version on release with androgynous poster. Already on the Gene bus but loved the lush textures and cosmic overtones. Nobody else I knew was interested. I had access to import shops in London, so it was easy to find."

"I bought my copy in the mid-70s. Couldn't believe how good it was, I even remember John Peel giving it a good review in *Sounds*," says another reader, Alan Frost.

"I do remember Pete Frame and Paul Kendall raving about it," says *ZigZag* mainstay and long-time *Shindig!* contributor Kris Needs. "That Byrds grapevine was a big thing then. The general attitude, like it had been since the mag launched in '69, was that it was too much for those times and the mainstream going for the blander stuff getting the big push Gene never enjoyed."

By early '76, *No Other* was deleted and consigned to remainder bins, and Gene sounded less confident about his masterpiece. "It was bits and pieces of a concept that was starting to come together," he told Mick Brown for *Sounds* in January '76.

Speaking to *Dark Star* while in the UK the following summer, he'd changed his tune slightly. "I really consider *No Other* a great album – I'm very proud of it. But I was very disappointed and let down after its release that it didn't go any further than it did… Ironically enough it is now being re-released and is getting more attention now than it ever did then." The same month, Clark reiterated to *ZigZag*, "Now it's getting more attention than it ever did, and has been reissued, but I think it was misunderstood generally by the public and the media."

Despite Gene's mentions of a reissue, his wires were sadly crossed – probably due to scores of starstruck British fans raving about it to him during '77. *No Other* wasn't issued again until towards the end of his life, when Edsel released it on CD in '89 – leading to a new generation (some inspired by This Mortal Coil's '86 cover of 'Strength Of Strings') slowly embracing it. During this barren period, Gene Clark became yet more elusive.

"It's difficult to explain the difficulty I had in tracking down Gene's music," says

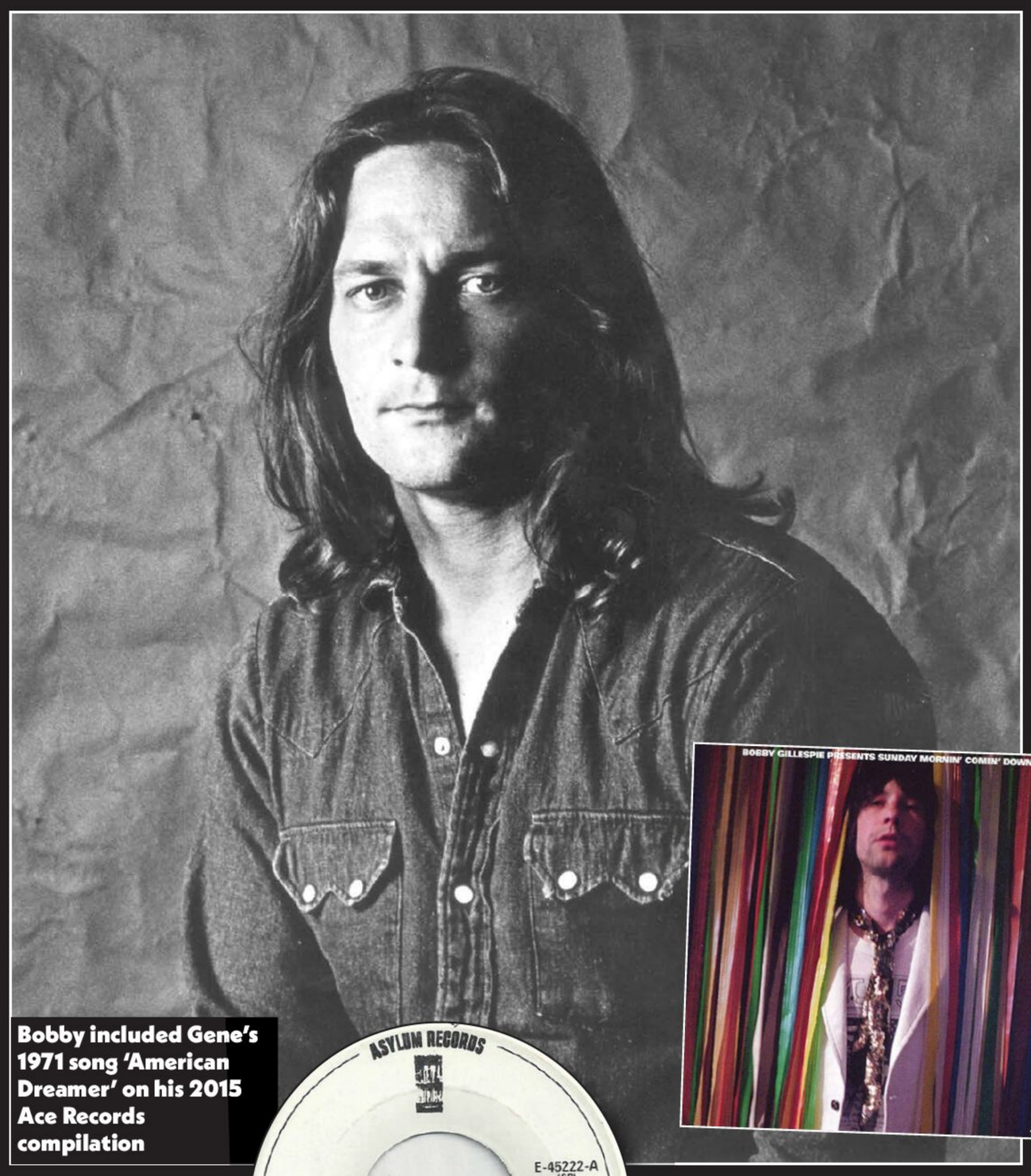
Bobby Gillespie *on the lost artistic climate that allowed Gene Clark free reign to create his masterpiece*

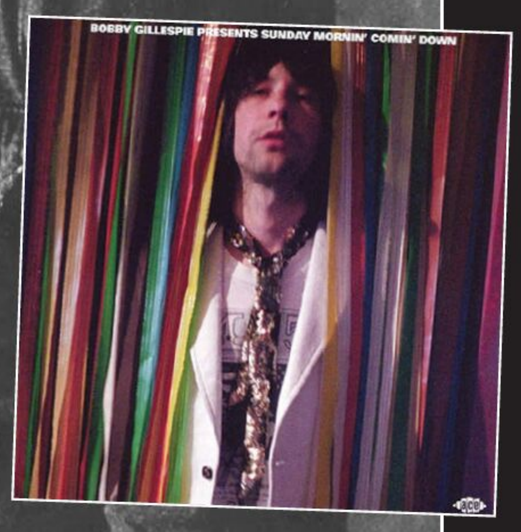
"With *No Other*, Gene Clark created music that combined Appalachian country high lonesome heartbreak and existential poetry with gothic European orchestral cinematic psychedelic sound pictures that realised a cosmic American dream sound deep soul phantasmagoria for the listener to lose themselves in, that almost cost Gene his sanity and dumbfounded his label boss. David Geffen had ploughed hundreds of thousands of dollars into the recording, hoping that Gene would write another hit song like he'd done with The Byrds in the '60s to compete with country-pop chart toppers The Eagles – but instead was presented with this huge-sounding sprawling epic of an album that is unique and beautiful, and a soul saving miracle that on release sold next to nothing.

No Other was a commercial flop. However, the album stands as a testament to that brief time in the early '70s when visionary artists like Gene Clark were afforded the time and money to unleash the mania of their imaginations to make the music of their dreams be realised. That golden epoch wasn't to last.

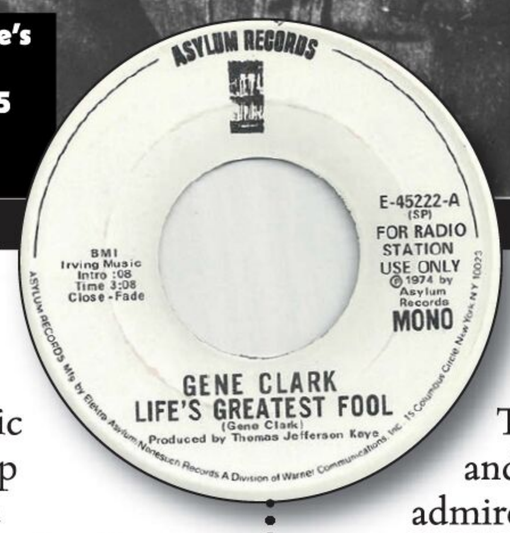
Of course, Gene was no stranger to the chemical excesses of the times and *No Other* was created with the same artistic freedom and madness that Dennis Hopper enjoyed whilst directing *The Last Movie*. Hollywood and the big American music corporations threw millions of dollars at young directors and would-be music moguls, one of which was David Geffen, hoping to repeat the worldwide mega success of *Easy Rider* and Woodstock. Gene Clark's masterpiece *No Other* was a beneficiary of those excessive and art-funded times.

In these techno-feudalist days where streaming services and record company shareholders are hoovering up the vast profits from the work of musicians with extremely small returns for the artists, that frontier is now closed."





Bobby included Gene's 1971 song 'American Dreamer' on his 2015 Ace Records compilation



Tom Sandford, author of the excellent Clarkophile blog. "I wasn't able to track it down until '92 or so, when I found an exorbitantly priced copy of the German CD in Toronto. It took a while to click with me, but I grew to love it dearly. For me, *No Other* is a remarkable achievement. It is the pinnacle of Gene's artistry and the purest distillation we have of his poetic vision."

"I discovered *No Other* at an old school record shop in Pompton Lakes, NJ," says Duncan Shepard of *Shindig!* psych faves The Striped Bananas. "It was a repress on the Edsel label. Something about the cover art invited me to listen. Upon first listen, I was sucked into the music. Gene's strong voice acting as the leader of a caravan of layers of dubs and intricacies."

Other latter-day fans point to David Bennun's superb essay on *No Other* in '95 *Melody Maker* paperback *Unknown Pleasures*. This is also where your correspondent, at the time a teenage junior Byrdman comes in. After devouring this, Gene's '92 *Echoes* compilation, Rogan's cosmic doorstop *Timeless Flight Revisited* and A&M's peerless *Flying High* set – it's safe to say I wasn't expecting to find a pristine (save for an import "clip") original copy of *No Other* in a Bournemouth record shop for about the price you'd pay for a G&T these days. Or to make the noise I made when I found it. Its eight beautiful, soaring songs still live permanently rent-free in my head.

"I think I read a review of the 2003 CD reissue a couple of years after it was released," says cosmic-boogie king Bobby Lee. "It was around the time I was getting deep into The Byrds and just beginning to explore Cosmic American Music. I picked up an original copy for under a tenner shortly after. All time fave."

No Other enjoyed a gradual groundswell over the next decade. Downtempo electro-Americana duo Soulsavers covered 'Some Misunderstanding' on 2009 album *Broken* with the late Mark Lanegan on vocals. Meanwhile, a hand-me down original copy of *No Other* belonging to Beach House's Victoria Legrand would ultimately lead to something bigger. "I remember having that feeling. Why isn't this one of the records that people talk about?" bandmate Alex Scally told *The Washington Post* in 2014.

Scally and Legrand became so obsessed they formed the 15-strong Gene Clark No Other Band for a series of shows with guests from modern alt-rock royalty and Iain Matthews. An early UK Gene fan of note, Matthews had led Fairport Convention through a spritely BBC session version of 'Tried So Hard' from Clark's solo debut as early as '68 – probably the earliest-known British Gene cover. By coincidence, while living in LA, Matthews also sung on the Neuwirth album in late '73. Squaring the circle in 2014, he'd perform an impassioned 'Silver Raven' with the No Other band. ("Probably the most satisfying collaboration of my career," Iain told *Shindig!* in 2020.) The gigs included the screening of a new edit of Paul Kendall's acclaimed film *The Byrd Who Flew Alone,* released to acclaim the previous year. The film drew in new fans and brought it back home to US admirers like Ingrid Neimanis, a tireless campaigner to get Gene inaugurated into The Songwriters Hall Of Fame. "I first became aware of Gene's solo work with the release of the *Echoes* CD compilation in '92. At that time, there was very little of Gene's back catalogue available, let alone *No Other,* which was long out of print." Reconnecting with Clark's music after Kendall's sublime film, Ingrid became a devotee. "Hearing it for the first time as a complete album I was in awe of the beauty and the diversity of sounds and genres," she says.

Fifty years on, Gene Clark and *No Other* still hide in plain sight in many ways. "It's like saying that everyone should have a Picasso on their wall," Gene told Kendall in '77. "Not everyone can look at a Picasso and get anything out of it." As the great man said, "Sometimes it's so hard to see / which one is the true one," but to hear it is to love it almost instantly. Perhaps that's why *No Other*, conjured while staring at the ocean, bewitches so many. After all, we're mostly water.

With many thanks to Bobby Gillespie, Paul Kendall, Jon 'Mojo' Mills, Kris Needs, Ingrid Neimanis, Jon Savage, Tom Sandford and Rich Walker, but mostly to Gene Clark and Thomas Jefferson Kaye

No Other Sessions is out now on 4AD

So High I've Been

In the opening instalment of our in-depth two-part Q65 history, über-fan, expert and essayist Mike Stax follows the Dutch bad boys - the original "long-haired scum" - from inception to success, fame and collapse

"It sounds good and we're not trying to win any beauty prizes here." Q65 singer Wim Bieler whips the audience into a frenzy, 1966

The classic Mk I line-up, 1966. L-R: Peter Vink, Frank Nuijens, Jay Baar, Willem Bieler, Joop Roelofs

Long-haired scum. That's how the older generation in the Netherlands saw Q65. But to their fans – then and now – Q65 represented a way of life. With their music, their image, their every move and action, they rejected conformity and challenged us to follow in their wake. "We were mirrors for progressive views of young people of our era," guitarist Joop Roelofs told this writer shortly before his death in 2018.

It wasn't until decades after the original group's breakup that the "long-haired scum" began to receive the respect they deserved in their home country, not only for their music but for their impact on the culture. In 2011, a postage stamp was issued honouring Q65 and their *Revolution* album. In 1966, that would have been beyond unthinkable. Their music had also begun to attract an enthusiastic cult following outside of the Netherlands. "The internet made it possible to communicate about Q65," reflected Joop. "It raised peoples' historical consciousness, and now, after so many years, it is easier to appreciate our way of playing music."

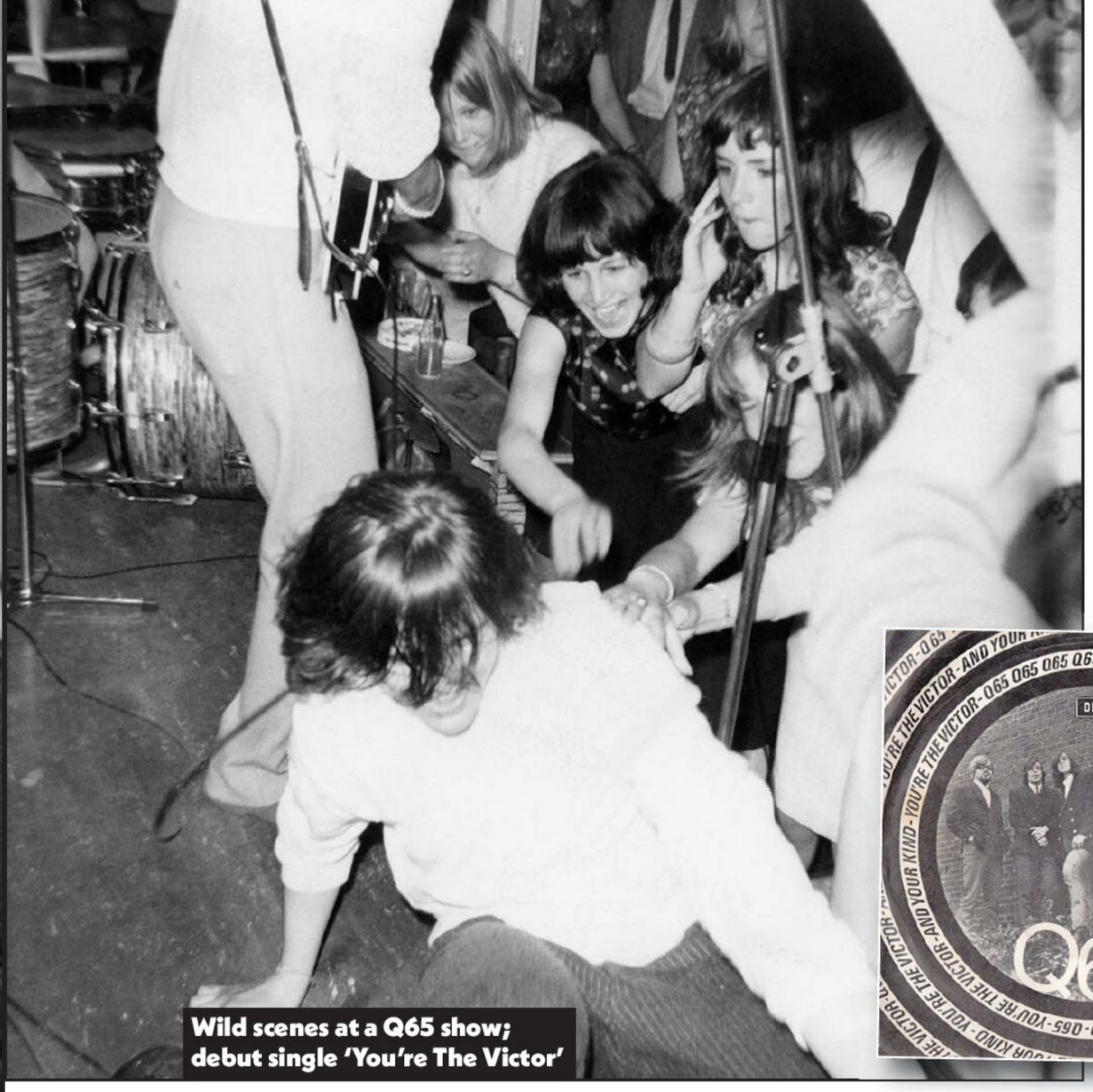
Q65's way of playing music was something special and unique, as the contents of *The Life We Live*, Pseudonym's luxurious, definitive new box set, make abundantly clear.

The five original members of Q65 – Willem Bieler, Joop Roelofs, Frank Nuijens, Peter Vink and Jay Baar – all grew up in the Zuiderpark (South Park) area of The Hague. A grey, working-class and lower middle-class neighbourhood populated by grey, working-class and lower middle-class people: low-level state officials, insurance clerks, soulless bureaucrats, office drones. In the communal gardens and concrete wasteland between the flat blocks, their bored children grouped together in search of fun, their grey, rain-streaked existence soundtracked by the monotonous hammering of the concrete pile drivers used to lay the deep foundations required by the sandy soil of the region. Rock 'n' roll, transmitted over the late-night airwaves from Radio Luxembourg or the American Forces Network in Germany, provided an outlet for escape for many of the Zuiderpark kids, including Frank Nuijens. "When I first heard Elvis and Little Richard at the age of 10, the gates of heaven opened for me," he says. Frank's father played Hawaiian guitar, and at the age of 12 Frank bought his own guitar with money he'd saved up from picking tomatoes. "I got a guitar and started imitating our American heroes with a few friends in my neighbourhood," he says. "Rock 'n' roll got me."

They called themselves The Strangers, one of countless Indo-Rock bands in The Hague at the time. "We were looking up to the Indo-Rock musicians," remembers Frank, "because they had talent for music, were very technical, and had fine instruments as well. I'm looking back with much fun to the years I was a member of Indo-Rock bands. They were often brothers and cousins and I felt at home with them." Nuijens was playing in The Strangers as early as '62. It wasn't until a couple of years later, in '64, that drummer Jay Baar and bass player Peter Vink took their first tentative musical steps alongside singer Paul Verstraten and guitarist Harry Schublin in a Rolling Stones-inspired R&B band called Leadbellys Ltd. Prior to this Vink had played briefly in a combo called The North Stars.

Joop Roelofs was observing all of this from the sidelines. "At the time, I used to frequent a bar in The Hague where a lot of bands performed. I quickly noticed how much attention those guys were getting and thought: 'I want that too!' I already owned a guitar, but I couldn't play it for shit. So I had to find someone with a bit more musical skill, so to speak. That happened to be Frank." "My first impression was that Joop was only joking," remembers Frank. "I didn't even know he played guitar. But his enthusiasm seduced me to give it a try."

Roelofs already had his singer picked out, a long-haired kid named Willem Bieler, who could often be spotted on the dance floor "leaping around as if he was possessed". Joop and Frank had no idea whether or not Willem could sing, but his



Wild scenes at a Q65 show; debut single 'You're The Victor'

"The first thing I saw was singer Wim Bieler giving his heart and soul to simulating sexual acts on the microphone as a gaggle of girls watched, full of adoration. I knew from that moment that this was going to be my band"

long hair and extrovert personality overrode any concerns about his vocal prowess. At first Bieler was reluctant to join, being more interested in playing football than band rehearsals, but eventually he agreed. Peter Vink and Jay Baar joined shortly afterwards, Leadbellys Ltd having recently disbanded.

Roelofs came up with the name for the new group by combining the titles of two Rolling Stones numbers, 'Suzie Q' and 'Route 66' – the 66 changed to 65, the year of their formation. Q65 – the name was like a secret code, the password to a new way of living, part of a forbidden language known only to the band and their circle.

Q65 divided rehearsals between the houseboat where Jay Baar lived with his parents, and a local roller-skating rink, the Eekhoorn (squirrel). On 21st May '65, they played their first gig at the Uitgebreide Technische School in Scheveningen, for which they were paid the princely sum of 10 guilders (the equivalent of less than €5 today). "After 15 minutes we were forced to end our gig, due to too much volume," remembers Frank, "which the audience didn't like at all."

But within a few short months, Q65 began to attract a large and fiercely loyal following among the kids in The Hague. Graffiti with the band's name started appearing on walls throughout the city (some of it can be seen to this day), and girls began to trail the band members around town. Soon their rehearsals at the Eekhoorn were attracting larger crowds than their paying concerts.

Peter Koelewijn was one of Holland's earliest rock 'n' roll singers, hitting the charts in early '60s with his band Peter & The Rockets. In the mid-60s he began working as a producer and occasional talent scout. "I just started working at record label Phonogram when the management decided that the company should start working with Dutch beat groups," Koelewijn recalls. "My colleague Hans van Hemert and I got assigned the task of finding potentially successful groups. I definitely wanted to visit De Marathon in The Hague, a roller-skating rink where every Monday the artists and managers would meet in the cafeteria."

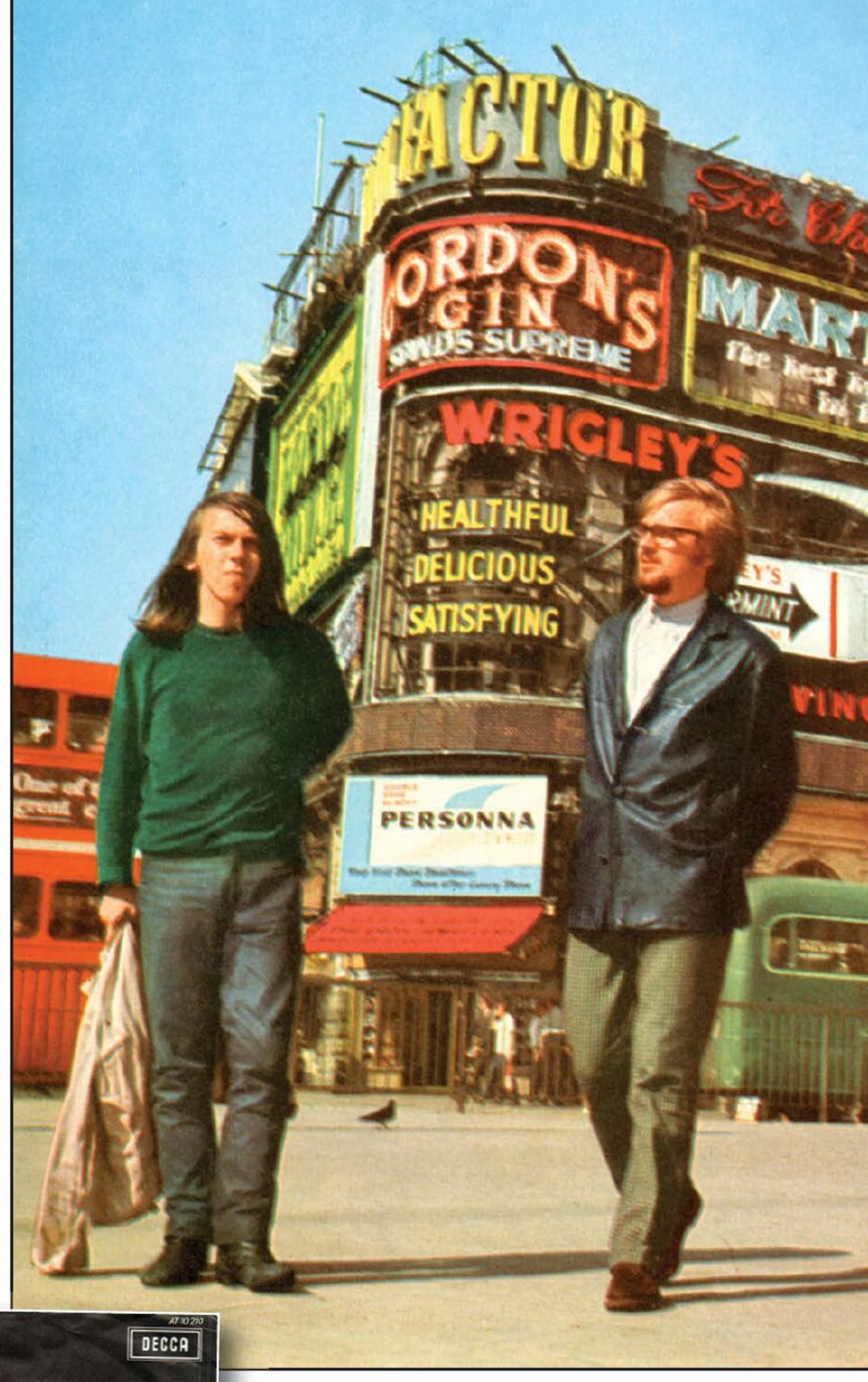
Upon arriving in The Hague, he saw the name Q65 as graffiti on walls everywhere he went. Asking around, he learned that the band could often be found at the Eekhoorn so, his curiosity aroused, he headed over there. "When I stepped into the Eekhoorn the group was rehearsing for a gig," he continues, "and the first thing I saw was singer Wim Bieler giving his heart and soul to simulating sexual acts on the microphone as a gaggle of girls watched, full of adoration. I knew from that moment that this was going to be my band. A colleague, more used to the neat Jay-Jays, remarked outside the venue what a mess the group was."

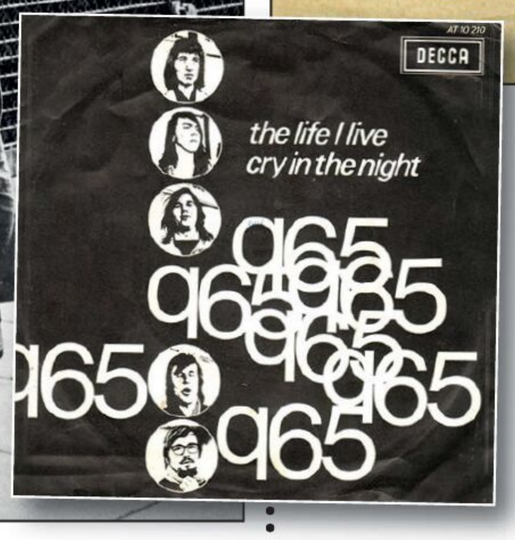
Koelewijn scheduled Q65 for a recording test at Phonogram studio in Hilversum. The session required the group coming up with some original songs, a task that fell to Nuijens, the most accomplished musician, and Baar, the most fluent English speaker – with Bieler also throwing a few ideas into the lyrics. The result, 'You're The Victor', was a slab of raunchy, raw, rushing rhythm & blues, powered by Baar's four-on-the-floor bass drum against a scrabble of guitar noise, plodding bass and wheezing harmonica. "At that moment the band only had two songs in their repertoire and we recorded both," remembers Koelewijn. "The guys weren't top-notch musicians, but they had something very special when it came to their raw musical style. It was obvious from the start for me that 'You're The Victor' would be their first single."

The session was Koelewijn's first production job. "I knew studio work from my own recordings with my band The Rockets," he recalls, "but someone else did the heavy lifting then. The sound technician was Jan Audier, for whom this was also an inaugural recording."

"No one else was willing to do the job," remembers Audier, who, at 26, was only a few years older than the band members. "It wasn't the kind of music that Phonogram Studio was used to. Just like with Abbey Road Studios, pop music was not done… not until they smelled money; that always changes the conservative tone of execs. I remember coming to the recording of 'You're The Victor' in suit and tie, but that didn't last long."

"During the warm-up I couldn't understand a word of what Wim Bieler was singing," Koelewijn continues. "I told Jan Audier that I'd stand next to Bieler in the recording booth. But even right next to him I couldn't understand a word.





Access denied! Q65 fail to perform at London club Tiles, early June 1966; a spot of tourism follows; second single and biggest hit 'The Life I Live'

'Never mind,' I told Jan, 'It sounds good and we're not trying to win any beauty prizes here.' The group's sound was raw but not rough enough for my taste. I'd heard records from The Who and Pretty Things and I wanted a similar distorted and 'rounding' sound. 'My meters are going in the red!' Jan called out, doubtingly. 'Turn them off, you won't see it then,' I replied, as a novice not knowing what I was talking about.

"When the recording was finished," he adds, "the technician did not want to store it in the studio archives, afraid his colleagues would come after him for malpractice! But as soon as the record became a hit he removed the record from its hiding place and delivered it proudly to the studio archives."

'You're The Victor' backed with 'And Your Kind' was assigned to Phonogram's Decca affiliate and released in March '66. Boosted by the band's legion of followers in The Hague and airplay on Radio Veronica, it sailed straight into the Dutch charts, climbing as high as #11 and staying in the Top 40 for 13 weeks. After less than half a year together, Q65 were suddenly one of the biggest bands in the country. "Other bands did not appreciate that," chuckled Roelofs, "after working so many years with less results."

For their second single, the band was teamed with a new producer, Hans van Hemert. Although only 21 years old, van Hemert was already steeped in the world of music and entertainment as the son of the successful actor, TV and theatre director and songwriter Willy van Hemert. As the lead singer of The Caps, Hans had recorded three singles for Philips, and now had ambitions to become a hit record producer. He remembers his first meeting with Q65 well. "When I arrived at my first Q65 rehearsal in The Hague, Willem Bieler, asked – in a thick Haagse accent – what was keeping the producer. My problem was that as a 21-year-old I looked like I was 13, and the members of the Q65 looked like their actual age. Music heals everything," he laughs, "even this barb! In the beginning, though, it was kind of a disadvantage. To try and intimidate me the band would play even louder than at a normal gig, which had the sound adjusted for the audience."

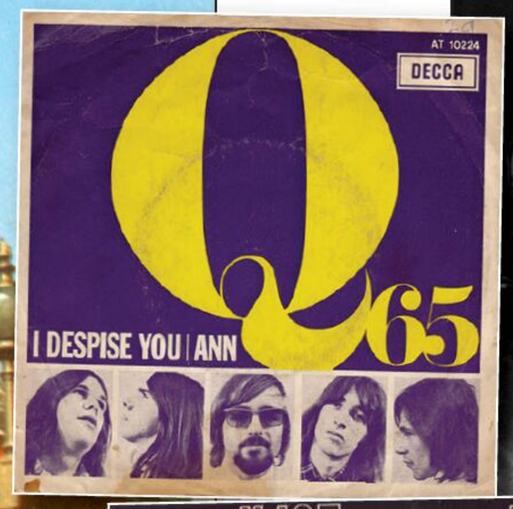
Also, Hans was from The Gooi, an affluent area of Hilversum, which at first didn't sit well with the working-class boys from the Zuiderpark, especially Bieler. "In the eyes of the Q, Hans van Hemert was a real snob from the Gooi," remembers Audier, "which took them a second to acclimate to. However, mutual acceptance and respect followed, with the results, soon after."

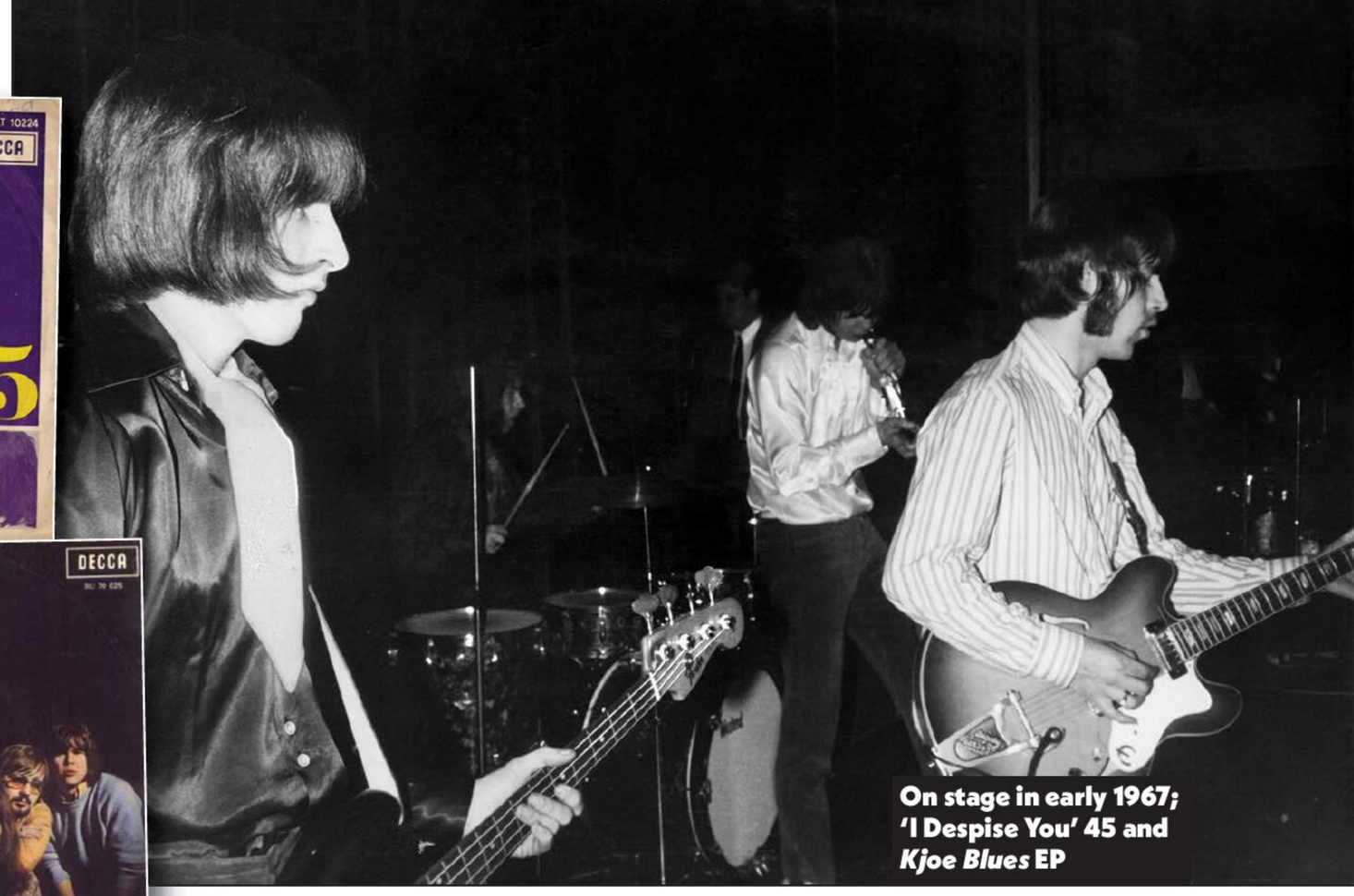
"We were a chaotic and crazy bunch together," remembers van Hemert, "each one of us just as passionate about the music as the rest. We were quite a bunch of characters: a pompous twit from The Gooi, and a ragged bunch of musicians from The Hague."

"It was chaotic for sure, but the humour was present all-around," says Jan, "just like the new smell of pines (hashish) in the studio." Asked to describe that ragged bunch of characters, Audier says, "Willem Bieler was very verbose and a real macho ladykiller. Frank Nuijens was quiet and an inspirational force in the band. Joop Roelofs was bit of an introvert who preferred to play at max power and with ripped speaker cones. Peter Vink was a good bass player; loads of The Hague humour. Jay Baar often had his head in the clouds; very serious, a great drummer."

After working with him on their first single, the band already trusted Audier, and, as they soon learned, he and Van Hemert made a great team. "Jan Audier was a man who shared my irreverent attitude to convention," enthuses Hans. "If push came to shove, he would have lit the mixing console on fire to potentially get a better sound if I had asked him to."

'Cry In The Night' was the song earmarked for the single's A-side. But as soon as the band kicked into the powerful, snarling riff that drives the song, it was obvious the volume of the guitars





On stage in early 1967; 'I Despise You' 45 and *Kjoe Blues* EP

overpowered the vocals. "The challenge was getting the sound and atmosphere of the Q on tape as close to real life as possible," explains Jan. "During recording we'd often exceed the hearing limit by a considerable amount."

The producer and the sound engineer were up for the challenge. "We cut loose especially on 'Cry In The Night'," Hans recalls. "I remember asking Jan about deejay limiters, which suppress the music if the deejay is talking, and if we could do the same for the vocals of Willem Bieler – it created an immense sound! Just listen to the result thanks to a tube limiter that Jan built himself."

Joop Roelofs always felt that 'Cry In The Night' was the track that best captured the essence of the Q65 sound. "It really sounds like it should," he told me. "Music and guts." The balance and blend of Roelofs' and Nuijens' guitar was a crucial, indefinable element in all of their best work. "Joop was the man who was all about the sound," explains Hans, "even if he had to create a horrible racket with a single string. Listen for example to 'Cry In The Night' where he completely cut loose. Frank was a more sophisticated musician, in comparison."

Originally the group had planned to record a song called 'Feel Her Still (Not The Same)' for the B-side. However, that plan was abandoned when they came up with a new number: 'The Life I Live'. Thrown together in the studio on the day of the session, 'The Life I Life' had an innovative, instantly arresting arrangement with twisted guitar riffs and a shifting, shuffling backbeat, while Jay Baar's lyrics (with some assistance from Willem) were an honest depiction of the events occurring in their lives at the time: the death of a beloved pet dog, Joop's rowdy wedding reception just a few days earlier, an affair with a rich married woman, and a lifestyle of music-making, drinking and dope smoking that was well outside of the societal norms of the time.

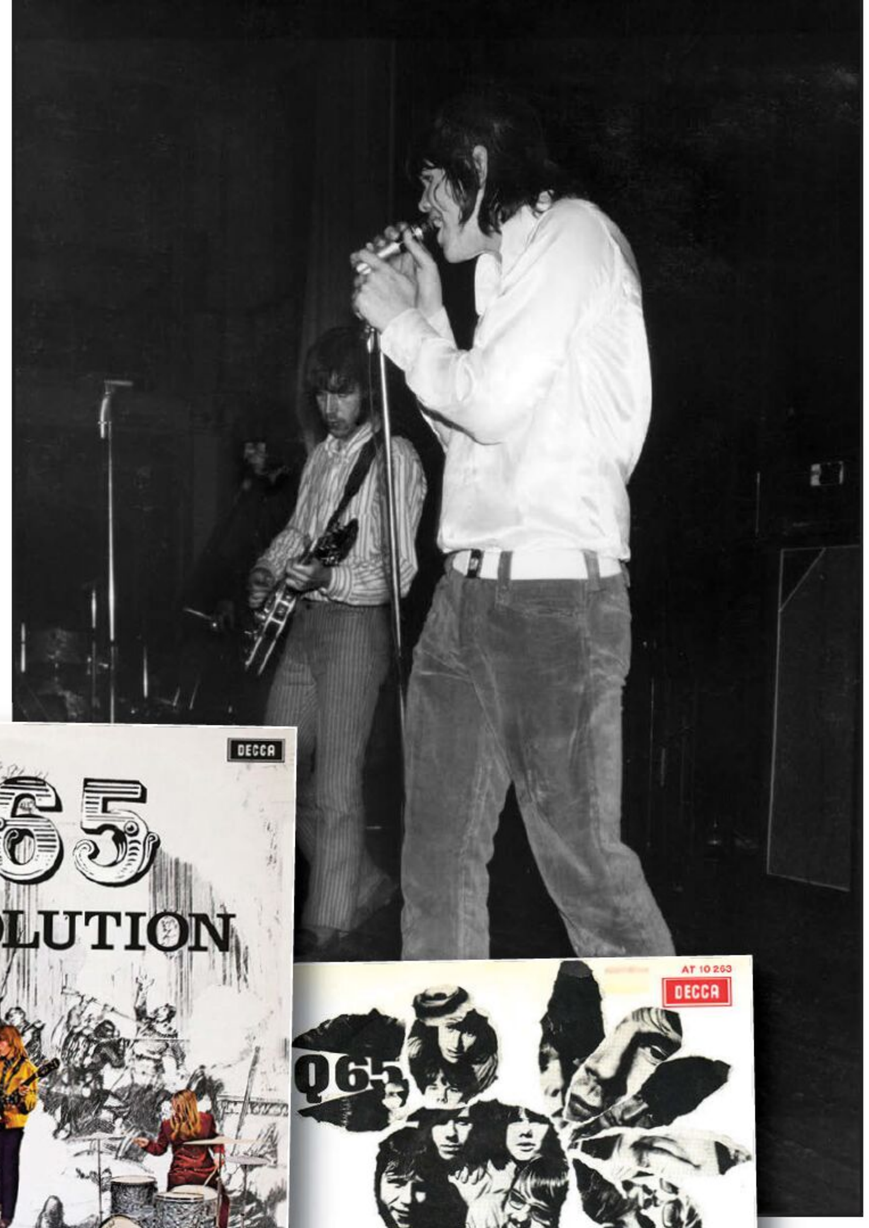
"Joop was the man who was all about the sound, even if he had to create a horrible racket with a single string. Listen to 'Cry In The Night', where he completely cut loose"

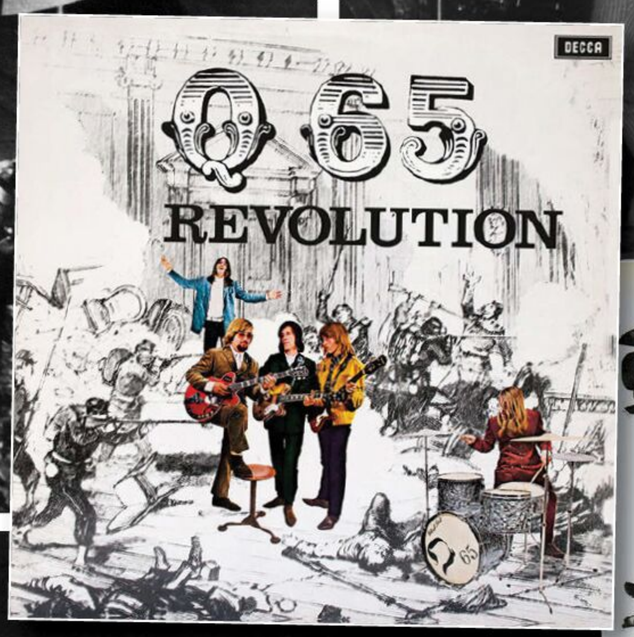
When the single was released in June of '66, 'The Life I Live' was the A-side with 'Cry In The Night' on the flip. To promote the single, Phonogram's label manager Cees Wessels came up with what he thought was an ingenious publicity stunt: the band would sail across the North Sea from London to Scheveningen in a rubber dinghy. On 2nd June, '66, Q65 duly sailed to London on an old Navy destroyer. They were told they'd be playing at London club Tiles on Oxford Street, but lacking the necessary work permits they were denied permission so had to content themselves with shooting a few publicity photos instead.

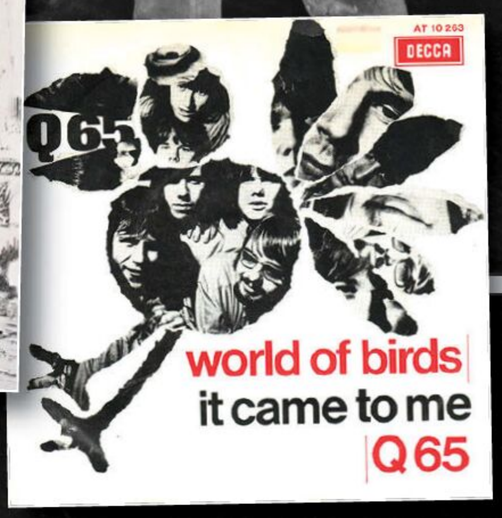
The next day, as planned, they set sail down the Thames in a rubber boat, kindly loaned by the Royal Dutch Lifeguard association. After a brief stop at Radio City, a British pirate radio station located in an abandoned World War II fort in the Thames Estuary, they hit the open sea, and immediately ran into trouble. The weather turned bad, the waves got bigger, and the small craft was unable to make any headway. Fortunately, they were being escorted by the destroyer, and were eventually hauled aboard, where they all proceeded to get violently seasick – with the notable exception of the houseboat dweller Jay Baar.

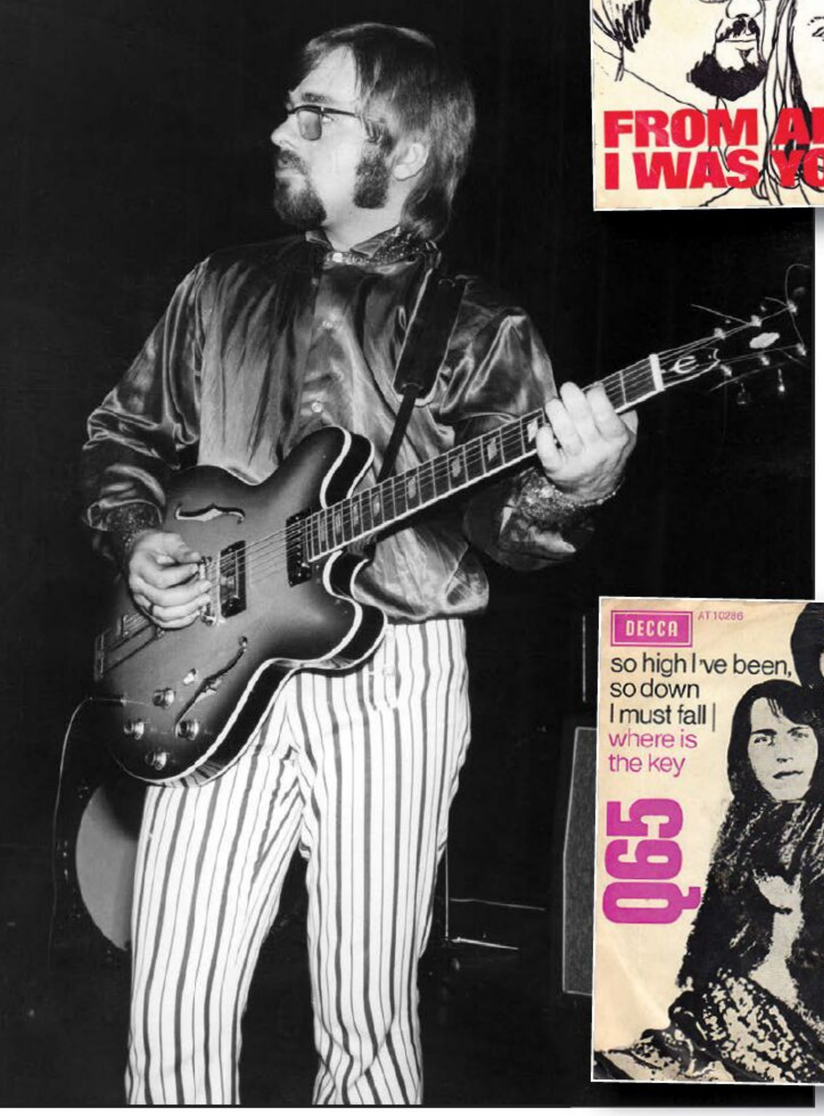
The larger, faster boat put them a day ahead of schedule, so they spent the night in Oostende, Belgium, then sailed on to Scheveningen the next day, climbing back into their dinghy at Hoek van Holland for the final leg of the journey. The group waded ashore through the breakers to be greeted on Scheveningen beach by an estimated 10,000 fans (some newspapers reported as many as 30,000), who had been alerted to their arrival via regular bulletins on Radio Veronica. After a shower and a change of clothes, they held a press conference on the pier (confessing to the papers that they hadn't made the entire trip by dinghy after all), then played a concert for the assembled multitude. It was a triumphant homecoming for the boys from the Zuiderpark. Q65's "Beat In The Boat" stunt was national news the next day, propelling 'The Life I Live' straight into the charts, where it stayed for most of the summer, peaking at #5.

With the "long-haired scum" now selling piles of records, the suits at Decca/Phonogram gave the go-ahead for a full-length album. Working again with producer Hans van Hemert and engineer Jan Audier, the group crafted an album of remarkable range and diversity. "It was my idea to make an album where we did everything we were able to," said Joop, "to show we were not just hit-makers, but could play all kinds of music, no matter what." Rather than stick to the proven formula of electric guitars, harmonica, bass and drums, Q65 utilised an array of different instruments including harmonium, flute, saxophone, washboard and Bulgarian mandolin. "The idea was to do something that hadn't been done in our country before," explains Frank, "and we succeeded. I remember we used









Before the drugs kicked in. Clockwise from this pic: Jay; Frank and Wim; Peter and Frank; Joop; 1966's *Revolution* album and assorted '67 singles

sandpaper, bottles, strangely tuned guitars and so on."

The album was originally to have been titled *Lava* – "to underline our ERUPTIVE SOUND, of course," Joop explained – but the final choice, *Revolution*, was more apt for a record that seemed to smash down every barricade – musical, physical, mental, real, imagined – in an orgy of pure, undiluted creative abandon. Storming Bo Diddley beat shakers ('I Got Nightmares') sit cheek to jowl with exotic harem serenades ('Just Who's In Sight'), baked, proto-psychedelic punk ('Summer Thoughts In A Field Of Weed'), and gnarled, savage blues ('Down In The Bottom'). On the haunting 'Sour Wine', Nuijens plays a 16-string mandolin and Baar a harmonium (with Vink operating the bellows). Their thrilling, fuzz guitar overloaded version of 'I'm A Man' channels the pile-hammering sounds that reverberated through the housing projects of the Zuiderpark. Towards the end of the song, Bieler can be clearly heard shouting "I think I'll fuck ya!" several times – something the record company execs obviously missed, but the band's fans heard loudly and clearly – especially the female ones. More barricades tumble in an almost 14-minute version of Sonny Boy Williamson's 'Bring It On Home', a wild blues improvisation that includes the sound of Bieler rubbing pieces of sandpaper together.

Released in September of '66, *Revolution* was a big critical and commercial success. It shot into the Top 10, beating out new releases by The Rolling Stones, The Animals and The Troggs, and going on to sell in excess of 35,000 copies, enough for gold record status in the Netherlands. Meanwhile, on 18th December, '66, at the Miss Beat 1966 elections held in Soesterberg, Q65 were awarded a silver disc for 'The Life I Live' having sold over 25,000 units.

Prior to that, in November '66, a new single was released, pairing the savage 'I Despise You' with an uncharacteristically tender ballad, 'Ann'. It reached #19 in the charts, and was followed in January '67 by 'From Above', a fine melodic number with a swirling controlled feedback break, backed with the brooding 'I Was Young', which peaked at #13.

The next Q65 single appeared in April '67. 'World Of Birds' was an ominous, almost regal-sounding waltz that built incrementally in intensity, aided by the addition of tuned timpani. "We never had any limitations," says Hans van Hemert, "aside from things turning dark at some point, and that not even always! Like you can hear on *Revolution*, we went in all directions possible. 'World Of Birds' is a

"Willem would leave the band soon, Jay was daily on LSD... the problems were piling up. The mood had shifted from euphoric to total shit"

The short-lived Circus, April 1968. L-R: Frank Nuijens, Marco Klein, Frank Verhoef, Jay Baar

similar extreme." The song was backed by another killer Q original, 'It Came To Me', a straight-ahead rocker propelled by a nasty three-note fuzz riff and a relentless 4/4 beat. Despite its dark mood, 'World Of Birds' outsold Q's previous two singles, peaking at #8 and sticking around the Top 40 for nine weeks.

The *Kjoe Bloes* EP was also released during this period. It featured sterling cover versions of Jimmy Reed's 'Ain't That Lovin' You Babe' (pepped up with some tough fuzz guitar), Howlin' Wolf's 'No Place To Go', Robert Johnson's 'Ramblin' On My Mind' and original instrumental '80% O', the title of which refers to hash mixed with 80% pure opium.

By the summer of '67, though, the band was in a state of turmoil. Nuijens and Baar were both shooting heroin, and Bieler had received his first draft notice, meaning he would eventually have to serve time in the military. "We were in a lethal situation," admitted Roelofs. "Willem would leave the band soon, Jay was daily on LSD. We decided to prepare our final single in quiet surroundings, so we rented a farm in the middle of nowhere for a couple of days." The result of Q65's rural retreat was to be the last recording by the band's original incarnation and, as usual, Jay Baar's lyrics were reflective of both his state of mind and the situation around him: 'So High I've Been, So Down I Must Fall'. "I have no good memories of 'So High I've Been'," admits Frank. "It was our final recording and the atmosphere was sick. I pushed it into the background later, I think. The lyrics are rather cynical."

Released at the end of October '67, 'So High I've Been, So Down I Must Fall' backed with the delicate 'Where Is The Key' failed to chart, and the final months of '67 saw the group falling to pieces. Baar was jailed for drug possession in November, and soon afterwards Bieler received his second draft notice. "He had already gotten a postponement and maybe he could have had another one," explained Joop, "but by then the problems were piling up. The mood in the band had shifted from euphoric to total shit. So suddenly it became appealing for him to enlist in the army." "It just was over and out," says Frank.

At the beginning of '68, Frank Nuijens, Jay Baar and Joop Roelofs regrouped as Circus with Marco Klein on keyboards. In the early months of '68, they spent time in the Phonogram studio rehearsing and recording material intended for a single and an album. Uninspired by the new, more psychedelic direction, Roelofs dropped out of the project early on. Ultimately at least five tracks were completed, including 'Medusa' and 'Mother Mutha's Great Sundance', which Decca scheduled for release in May '68. A sleeve was designed, and a few test pressings were made, but the release was cancelled. Instead, Decca released a "new" Q65 single featuring two '66 tracks, 'Ann' and 'Sour Wine'.

Circus played just a couple of concerts, accompanied by an impressive liquid lightshow, but it was difficult to find acceptance for their new music, especially outside of the big cities. "The stupid thing was that when we played a venue the posters read, in a very small font, 'Circus,' then in huge characters, 'Q65', and underneath that, again very small, 'ex-members'!", laughs Frank. "We still attracted large crowds that expected the Q to play. When it wasn't what people hoped for, they'd boo us off the stage!"

Eventually Nuijens decided to leave and take a job as a producer at Phonogram. Circus struggled on for a few more months with new members, but it all came to an end in September '68 when Jay Baar was busted again for hash possession and sentenced to a spell in prison.

With all its band members dispersed, enlisted, incarcerated, or otherwise indisposed, the Q65 story could have ended there, but they would not be snuffed out so easily. Along with groups like Group 1850, The Zipps and The Outsiders, they'd sown the seeds for a vibrant underground music scene that was now proliferating across the Netherlands. In '69, Q65 would return for a remarkable second run. That story follows next time.

With thanks to Hans at Pseudonym

The Life We Live is out now on Pseudonym. Next issue we head to *Afghanistan* and a new era

Beat Dis!

Five other great groups from Den Haag

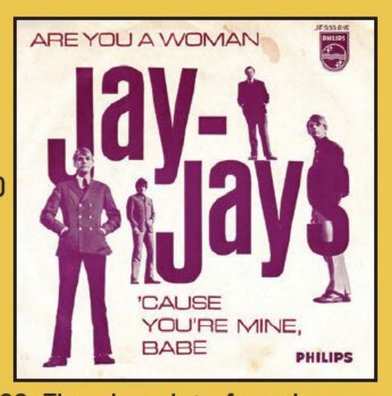
The Shane

Despite only releasing one 45 on Decca in 1967– the incredible double-sider 'Lady Bountifull' / 'Got To Hold On' – The Shane were clearly a class mod act of some calibre, as can be seen in the jaw-dropping live TV performances of both cuts on YouTube. Both sides rival the best of Small Faces or The Action: instantly catchy, soulful and propulsive with great racing basslines and clanging chords.

Peter & The Blizzards

Famous for their striking – and slightly preposterous – long straight white wigs, the band cut six 45s between 1965 and '68. The best, like 'Bye Bye Baby' and 'All I Want', bring frantic tambourine-bashing R&B in a primitive Pretty Things style, while 'Cold As Ice' is a pulsating mod beat gem with pretty brutal lyrics!

The Jay-Jays



Originally known as The Jumping Jewels, once the band shortened its name to the hipper-sounding Jay-Jays, they hit a rich vein of form, releasing a killer LP and no less than seven singles between 1965 and '68. There's a glut of goodness ranging from drum-smashing instrumental 'The Cruncher' to crunchy Kinks-inspired beat like 'Come Back If You Dare' and the slightly creepy twisted pop-soul of 'Are You A Woman?'

The Bumble Bees

Active between 1965 and '67, the band was originally called Mariska & The Bumble Bees before singer Mariska Veres jumped ship for fame and fortune with Shocking Blue. They then put out two fine 45s, both of which display strong Byrds and Beatles influences. 'You' is a folk-punk gem that should've been the A-side; follow-up 'Maybe Someday' / 'A Girl Of My Kind' is pure gold right the way through.

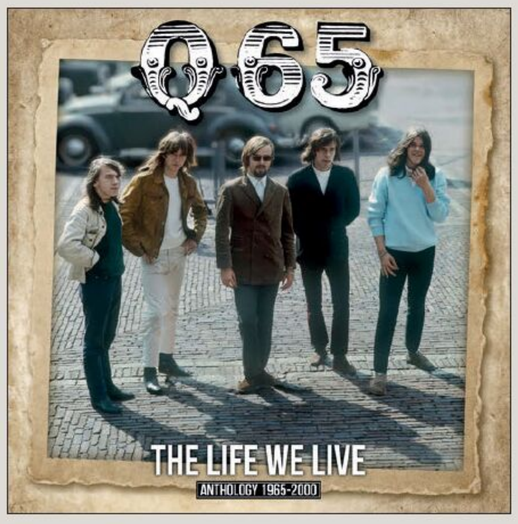
The Fun Of It

This four-piece released five singles between 1966 and '70, when they also put out their sole LP *Meditation*. Personal favourite is 'Drollery', the flip of their debut 45. Full of the kind of warped lyrics only a non-native could conjure up, it's a pounding beat cut with great fuzz lines, an all-too brief primitive Who-influenced rave-up midway through and an utterly unexpected penny whistle coda.

Hugh Dellar

Emerging The Victors

HUGH DELLAR eats up this mammoth, definitive study of The Netherlands' wildest sons



Q65
The Life We Live: Anthology 1965-2000
★★★★★
PSEUDONYM 11-CD BOX SET

In the '80s, when the big bouffants and even bigger shoulder pads of mainstream synth-pop encouraged many of us to dive into yesterday in search of more visceral thrills, certain '60s acts became cult heroes among niche groups. The art school crowd had The Velvet Underground and The Doors, while mop-topped garage heads proudly sported their Seeds and Love badges. For one small sect of beat maniacs, though, who craved both untamed R&B and outré experimentation and who wore their hair longer, only two acts truly mattered – and they both came from the Netherlands: The Outsiders from Amsterdam and Q65 from the working-class Zuiderpark area of Den Haag (The Hague). No one else came close.

At the epicentre of this obsession with the wild lost sounds of the '60s Dutch scene was Mike Stax and his then nascent *Ugly Things* fanzine, and it's only fitting that it's Mike who's behind the jaw-dropping, densely-annotated 216-page hardback book that accompanies this career-spanning release. Packed with band snaps, flyers, posters, record sleeves and pithy, insightful ravings, it's guaranteed to have lifelong fans drooling – and also provides a thorough overview of the internecine conflicts and personnel changes behind these astounding sounds.

While not quite capturing every single release every member of the band ever played on, this 11-CD set comes damn close, and does contain every recording that ever appeared under the Q65 name, along with much more besides. Disc One contains the primal mono mix punch of ground-breaking 1966 LP *Revolution*, which veers from the all-time existential punk anthem 'The Life I Live' to raw acoustic blues, Eastern-tinged proto-psych, brutal Bo Diddley-inspired pounders and soul stompers. Disc Six is the same album but in crisp, spatially separated stereo.

Disc Two spotlights the *Revival* LP, rushed out by Phonogram after the original line-up's demise, and featuring a slew of earlier 45s and EP tracks like the monstrous crunching thrill of 'Cry In The Night' and the deep-fried 'So High I've Been, So Down I Must Fall' alongside four new tracks by the short-lived Circus, which featured Q members Frank Nuijens and Jay Baar. Most remarkable is the instrumental 'Sundance', which sits somewhere between Appalachia and *avant-garde* tribal trance-out.

The release of *Revival* prompted the group to reconstitute itself (without drummer Jay Baar) and record a new album. *Afghanistan*, which makes up Disc Three, appeared in '70 and its name is testament to downtime consumption activities at this point. It's a sludgier, more bludgeoning sound, but still has its moments, especially on the atmospheric spaced-blues of 'Night'.

Disc Four is *We're Gonna Make It*, another cobbled together album stuck out post-break-up to capitalise on the band's continued popularity. It's mostly early '70s single sides, some out-takes and repeats from *Afghanistan*, but there are still some gems such as 'There Was A Day', which has dark 'Sour Wine' vibes.

Disc Five is the Rainman LP, Frank Nuijen's solo project from '71, which also features Jay Baar and Peter Vink among others, and is reminiscent of Val Stöecklein's bleak, world-weary classic *Grey Life*, a recommendation I rarely make. 'They Didn't Feel' is full of dark magic, and hits like the Stones in their most Gram-soaked country mood. Disc Eight is all the universally stellar 45 and *Kjoe Blues* EP cuts alongside a previously unreleased and unfinished '66 track, 'Feel Her Still (Not The Same), which sounds like the band processing The Byrds before throwing in a trademark rave-up. Beyond this, there's plenty of material from later incarnations and reunions, much of which this fan can live without, but all of which is worth a listen.

Manna from heaven for those in the know.

"*Revolution* veers from the all-time existential punk anthem 'The Life I Live' to raw acoustic blues, Eastern-tinged proto-psych, brutal Bo Diddley-inspired pounders and soul stompers"

Q65: rebellious in the mid-60s

ALESSANDRO ALESSANDRONI
Open Air Parade
★★★★★

SONOR MUSIC EDITIONS LP

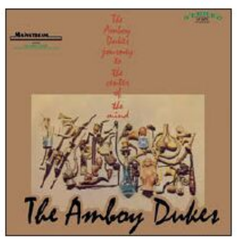
Still unsure about where to start your deep dive into the world of '70s Italian library music? You could do a lot worse than with this one-time Holy Grail.

Cut by composter/arranger/multi-instrumentalist and all-round talent Alessandroni (he was Ennio Morricone's whistler among numerous other claims to fame) with legendary bassist Giovanni Tommaso in 1972, it embodies the pair's fearless compositional skills, Rome's cutting-edge studio technology and the indomitable prowess of the city's top musicians. Stylistically, *Open Air Parade* generally eschews *avant-garde* deviations, preferring melodic innovation and some seriously groovy electric group frameworks in which close-miked acoustic guitars, atmospheric keyboards, propulsive rhythms and wordless chorals are the order of the day. This fresh remaster sounds incredible and comes in a thick cardboard sleeve. Grab it now.

Andy Morten

THE AMBOY DUKES
Journey To The Center Of The Mind
★★★★★

SUNDAZED LP



Yes, yes, Nugent, ugh. If that's your first thought, you need to circle back. Because this was a magnificent band, with magnificent musicians and magnificent songs, great singers (three of 'em) and the aforementioned knob, playing lead guitar the way that God would, if God were in a jaw-dropping hard-psych-blues band. From Detroit.

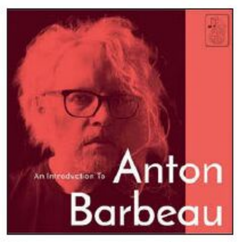
This, their second LP of three with [basically] the same line-up (singer John Drake would leave the fold after this one) is absolutely transcendent from stem to stern. The songs, written mainly by Steve Farmer with some help from Nugent, range from the hippy-dippy to the absolutely ferocious.

Side Two begins with their only big hit, the title track, and wanders on from there into a song cycle about religion, drugs, death and ultimate enlightenment that will probably make your head spin if it hasn't already. Pressed from the rediscovered stereo master tapes on "hookah-blue transparent vinyl", it includes a "free pack of rolling papers," apparently. Even Nick Drake never did *that* for you.

Mike Fornatale

ANTON BARBEAU
An Introduction To...
★★★

FRUITS DE MER CD



This wide-reaching 19-track anthology pulls together a bewilderingly diverse collection of material from the crowded discography of seriously prolific Californian psychedelic adventurer and Fruits de Mer collaborator Anton Barbeau.

Colourfully described as "the Californian lovechild of Robyn Hitchcock, Julian Cope and Andy Partridge", the album comes with both abundant echoes and indeed covers of originals by the aforementioned trio. But that's by no means the alpha and omega of the world according to Anton Barbeau. While particularly adept at tapping into peculiarly Anglified notions of pop-psych and fashioning a tidy DIY line in Bowie, Traffic, Donovan, Monkees and Big Star covers, the versatile Barbeau also somehow manages to stray into the world of vintage krautrock on the decidedly Tangerine Dream-esque 'Berlin School Of Doubt'. That minor miracle alone calls for one impressively flexible headspace.

Grahame Bent

JOE BATAAN
Drug Story
★★★★

NOW-AGAIN/GHETTO LP

This previously unissued title comes to you from the vaults of New York Latin soul legend Joe Bataan's short-lived Ghetto imprint. Comprising one side of Bataan's superlative recordings from 1972, the balance of material comes courtesy of his Ghetto labelmates Eddie Lebron, The Edwards Generation and One'Sy Mack.

Continues over

Trish Keenan. We're still under her spell

Magic Moments

BROADCAST
Spell Blanket: Collected Demos 2006-2009
★★★★★

WARP CD/2-LP

Since the untimely death of Trish Keenan in 2011, James Cargill has often spoken about compiling Broadcast's unrealised demos into a final release by the band, and his tradition of uploading recordings on Trish's birthday each year has become something of a celebration – albeit the kind where the more you eat the hungrier you get. Now, 13 years later, and not without a sense of sadness at the finality of it all, you can put these two discs on your turntable and enjoy listening to new Broadcast music for – almost – the last time.

Demo collections are often windows into the creative process and examining these short pieces, some of which are surprisingly almost fully-realised, reveals just how important certain production sounds and instruments were to the band's songwriting, especially in the complexity of Trish's multi-part vocals. No rough chords here, rather complete nascent forms, waiting to emerge.

There are sketches apparently recorded urgently on Dictaphone, complete with footsteps and motor hum, and ideas that harken back to the band's love of '60s pop, more evident on their earlier recordings. There are instrumental pieces that channel the much-aped Music For Schools sound, detuned and woozy, while others employ busy arpeggiators and drum machines, spiritual children of the minimalist electronics of 2005's *Tender Buttons*. Most common of all is a bucolic combination of layered voices and fingerpicked guitar, such as on the all-but-complete and quietly beautiful 'Infant Girl', 'Tunnel View' and 'Petal Alphabet'.

In truth, this collection is too much to take in and appreciate all at once. Its 36 tracks contain multitudes of ideas and styles. We'll be poring over them for years. Ultimately – and perhaps perversely – there's a strong feeling that we're not listening to something incomplete here. Broadcast so enjoyed exploring the fragmentary nature of perception and memory, and for all the production that went into their finished albums, in a very real sense these unfulfilled ideas represent them perfectly. It feels like how it has always felt to listen to them: to peer through a fragile glass and to see no distinction between past, present and future.

Christopher Budd

reviews then

Although everything here more than cuts the mustard as *bona fide* examples of early '70s Latin soul, it's those of Bataan and in particular the album's title track that steals the show. Taking the form of a mini suite the 12-and-a-half-minute opus spans the stylistic arc from reflective soul balladry to fast-paced social commentary. Consider it if you will a contemporaneous take on the drug overrun street culture of Curtis Mayfield's *Superfly,* complete with driving rhythms, wah-wah guitar, vibes, punchy horn lines and hard-hitting lyrics from the man widely considered to be the poet laureate of *El Barrio.*

Grahame Bent

JOHN BROMLEY
Sing
★★★

THINK LIKE A KEY CD/LP

Ambitious Mancunian Bromley had a few songs placed with artists in the late '60s before stepping in front of the mic for a run of singles and this, his sole album, released on Polydor in 1969.

Occupying the same commercially minded territory as Tony Hazzard, Graham Dee, Peter Lee Stirling and John Hetherington, *Sing* leans heavily on the production hallmarks of the day, with saccharine strings and singalong toytown choruses sometimes undermining his undeniable knack for a tune. The tougher selections – those which have bestowed something of a reputation on the album among popsike collectors – employ The Fleur De Lys, who Bromley had encountered while working with Sharon Tandy at Atlantic, and who add a much-needed rough edge. This new edition adds four non-album singles, while the CD bolts on a further nine demos.

Andy Morten

BRONCO BULLFROG
Seventhirtyeight
Oak Apple Day
BOTH ★★★★

BOTH GUERSSEN LP

On their second album, originally released 24 years ago on Twist, the über-talented London-based trio proved you could make an album inspired by Honeybus, Simon & Garfunkel, CSN (notably on the gorgeous 'Sweet Tooth') and, on opener 'My New Skin', that The Association *and* gnarly powerpop clatter could inhabit the same song. Lyrically, heart-on-sleeve self-analysis and social realism were central. It's a decent follow-up to the classic debut, recorded in a no fuss manner.

Oak Apple Day (2004), their fourth and final album, recorded in Spain with Creation Records' Joe Foster in the hot seat, is an apt swansong, on which tough You Am I-style garage-rock ('You're My Head') enters the fray amongst the punchy commercial jangle. If the band had continued, one would hope that the almost TV kids' theme 'I Got The Rain' would be the direction they'd have followed. Closer 'Litmus Paper Suit' is a career highlight that indicates Andy Morten may well have enjoyed a successful career as a singer-songwriter 30 years earlier.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills

CHILD
Child
Blueside
Soul Murder
ALL ★★★

ALL HEAVY PSYCH SOUNDS CD/LP

Not to be confused with bubblegum pop combo of the '70s, Child are heavy-psych blues protagonists, the likes of which you don't tend to hear too much of these days. They're not neo-psych, they're not drone-inflected, they're not experimental, they're good old-fashioned rock of the most traditional kind.

Hailing from Australia, Child's self-titled debut was released a decade ago, and pretty much set out the stall for what the band are about: crunching, thunderous, all-embracing guitar-based rock 'n' roll. The pseudo metal aesthetic that permeated their debut was dialled down for the follow-ups, 2016's *Blueside* and their most recent outing, last year's *Soul Murder,* both of which draw much more heavily on blues and hard-rock. Heavy Psych Sounds has reissued all three albums (plus 2018's EP *I*) on the obligatory limited edition coloured vinyl. If you like your rock classic, Child is most certainly the band for you.

Sarah Gregory

DECEMBER'S CHILDREN
December's Children
★★★

SUNDAZED LP

An unlikely influence on Blondie's Chris Stein, Ohio band December's Children cut their only album in 1970. There's a trace of psychedelia in the lyrics and music but mostly this is a collection of electric country-blues reflective of the roots revival of its era.

The chorus line vocal on many of these songs lends them a theatrical power. There's a macho strut to 'Sweet Talkin' Woman' and 'Last Monday Night', with the wah-wah pedal being worked overtime. Less immediate but more rewarding are reflective cuts such as acoustic reverie 'Jane's Song' and 'Too Early To Be Late', with its hypnotic spiral of organ and guitar. Alice Popovic, whose voice can be heard throughout the album, wails powerfully through the closing Rust Belt boogie of 'Back Road Rider' and 'Livin' Way Too Fast'. Without the bloat of some blues-rock, these concisely written and arranged songs reward a second listen.

Clive Webb

DRAGONFLY
Dragonfly
★★★★

GUERSSEN LP

Well, you'll be fooled early on. The first song will immediately put a picture in your head: a picture of four or five burly Biker Dudes who look and sound like every other no-hope regional outfit from 1968 –guys who sussed out that in middle America they would have to pretend to be either Steppenwolf or The Band, and chose Steppenwolf.

But that's only the first track on what ends up being a great record. There's plenty of dark psych and some serious pop sensibilities as well. The glue throughout is provided by Randy Russ's snaky, fat, fuzz-laden lead guitar lines – reminiscent of the sound Clapton, Nugent and Gary Quackenbush were using at around the same time. If you like late '60s heavy blues-based psych, you'll like this. That said, we'd be remiss if we did not warn you that it does, in fact, contain yet another fairly generic cover of 'Hoochie Koochie Man' in which the singer is unfamiliar with "John-the-Conqueror Root." Did *anyone* ever get this right?

Mike Fornatale

MARIANNE FAITHFULL
Faithfull Forever...
★★★

DECCA/UMR LP

It was customary in the '60s for British artists' work to be reconfigured, remixed or just plain bastardised for release in other territories, and while Faithfull's third US long-player has long been written off as such a hybrid, it can lay claim to being a *bona-fide* album, containing as it does three unique recordings, two alternate mixes and four songs that wouldn't see the light of day in the UK until the following year's *Loveinamist*.

The fey, baroque folk-pop that characterises much of Faithfull's '60s work dominates, but there are excursions into jazz and musicals ('Ne Me Quitte Pas (Love Theme From Umbrellas Of Cherbourg)' sung in its native French), as well as prescient covers of material written by Donovan, Norma Tanega and Bob Lind. This edition is freshly remastered, housed in an improved cover design and boasts reminiscences from Faithfull herself.

Andy Morten

FANIA ALL STARS
Latin-Soul-Rock
★★★★

CRAFT LATINO/FANIA LP

On 24th August 1973, a crowd of 40,000 witnessed a Fania All Stars show like no other at New York's Yankee Stadium. This mass gathering saw such legendary figures as Johnny Pacheco, Willie Colon, Ray Barretto and Hector Lavoe sharing the stage with special guests including Mongo Santamaria, Manu Dibango, Jorge Santana and The Mahavishnu Orchestra's Billy Cobham and Jan Hammer.

Long out of print, this special 50th anniversary gatefold edition once again makes available a unique moment in the unrivalled history of the All Stars. Featured tracks here include the supremely funky opener 'Viva Tirado', reworkings of Edwin Starr's 'There You Go', Joe Cuba's 'El Raton', Manu Dibango's 'Soul Makossa' (recorded at Puerto Rico's Coliseo Roberto Clemente in November '73) and the climactic finale of Larry Harlow's 'Congo Bongo' with Mongo Santamaria and Ray Barretto locked into an epic conga duel.

Grahame Bent

THEE HEADCOATS
I Am The Object Of Your Desire
★★★

DAMAGED GOODS LP

What was once the last will and testament of Thee Headcoats until the arrival of 2023's *Irregularis: The Great Hiatus* finally gets its long overdue reissue on shiny black vinyl.

Originally released by the Friends Of The Buff Medway Fanciers Association label way back in 2000, this boss platter finds Maestro Childish and his cohorts sounding as rough around the edges as you could hope for as they roll and tumble their way through 11 originals and a cover of Bo Diddley's 'Great Grandfather'. Coming on like the renegade sons of Chess Records and Hasil Adkins, Thee Headcoats' famously stripped back to the absolute basics shambolica is most potently showcased on 'Hurt Me (Slight Return)', 'In A Dead Man's Suit', 'Chatham Town Welcomes Desperate Men', 'In Blood' and 'Your Crying Means Nothing To Me (Slight Return)'. Thank the lord for dear old Chatham town.

Grahame Bent

THE HONEY POT WITH CRYSTAL JACQUELINE

An Introduction To...

★★★★

FRUITS DE MER CD

Icarus Peel and Crystal Jacqueline, along with various rhythm sections over the past dozen years, comprise The Honey Pot. They've selected some of their favourite tracks from numerous Fruits de Mer albums, singles and compilations for this eclectic, sometimes esoteric introduction (who's heard of Tonton Macoute, let alone covered them?)

Their interpretations of *Shindig!* favourites like Mighty Baby (a delightful poppy 'Egyptian Tomb') and The Strawberry Alarm Clock (the heavy-lidded dreamscape 'Rainy Day Mushroom Pillow') are particularly impressive, suggesting one helluva personal record collection.

Surprising twists (screaming solos, extended keyboard workouts, flute accoutrement) put a unique stamp on the covers and several originals ('Sweet Orange Sunshine' trips the light fantastic, 'Games For May' oozes Gilmourian Floydisms) and a blistering live 'White Rabbit' are perfect "introductions" for novices unfamiliar with The Honey Pot's unique brand of progressive psychedelia with a decidedly '60s bent.

Jeff Penczak

MIKE HUGG

The Solo Recordings: Somewhere / Stress & Strain

★★★★

UMBRELLA MUSIC 2-CD

This twofer collects the twin solo albums released by Mike Hugg, the longest serving member of Manfred Mann / Chapter Three alongside the titular Mr M. 1972's *Somewhere* fits the milieu of the times, with 'Blue Suede Shoes Again' sounding very Gilbert O, 'Bonnie Charlie' not unlike Phillip Goodhand-Tait, and even though Hugg penned all the songs, no one would be surprised to see Lynsey de Paul's name attached to 'Fool No More'.

It's all pleasant stuff, but after it shipped, Hugg was inexplicably seized by a 2008 anteater meme, threw his arms wide, and cried, "I'm Mike Fucking Hugg! I'm gonna make an AWESOME record!" And so he did. *Stress & Strain* is a soaring, dense, lush and immense lost classic. 'Tonight' is feelgood pop on a cinematic scale, 'If You're Missing Me' the power ballad as prog, and 'Picture Of You' surely provided the young John Miles his roadmap to success.

Peter Gallagher

LISTEN TO THE
SHINDIG!
BROADCAST
ON MIXCLOUD

PETE JOLLY

Seasons

★★★★★

FUTURE DAYS RECORDINGS CD/LP

A gifted if overlooked jazz pianist, Pete Jolly signed to A&M in 1968 and released two cool jazz records before adopting an original approach for his third LP. Gathering a team of seasoned players, he entered the studio and started sketching ideas on Wurlitzer, electric and acoustic piano, accordion and organ, letting songs manifest themselves from instinctual communication with the group.

Seasons developed from a four-hour improvisation, has been out of print on vinyl since '71 and has become both a cult favourite and a treasure trove for sample-driven hip-hop creations. This LP reissue (remastered from the original analogue tapes) reminds listeners of an utter jewel that, more than 50 years after the fact, still eludes categorisation, blending soothing jazz, near-funk grooves and library music smoothness with delectable turns and surprises: the title track is infused with a smooth Tropicalia breeze, while 'Bees' is a 'Flight of the Bumblebee' for the age of synths.

Camilla Aisa

METHUSELAH

Matthew, Mark, Luke And John

★★★★

GRAPEFRUIT CD

English five-piece Methuselah's one-and-done album, a partial concept piece based on the four chaps named in the title, finally secures a British release, a mere 55 years after it was loosed upon America to healthy reviews and terminal sales.

Now that it's here, it's not the psych-into-prog platter I expected. The whiff of those genres is certainly there, but other influences overpower them. 'Mark' and 'Luke', for example, could have escaped from any then-popular rock gospel musical, 'My Poor Mary' is pure gospel without the stage show, 'Matthew' is a blend of English folk and west coast harmonies, and 'Fairy Tale' has a poppy Blue Mink vibe. Two Methuselahs would later form Amazing Blondel, but man of the match is outtasight guitarist Les Nicol, who'd been, according to the press release, "Mick Ronson's main rival for guitar hero status in the Hull group wars a couple of years earlier."

Peter Gallagher

Barry Ryan. Kitsch? Moi?

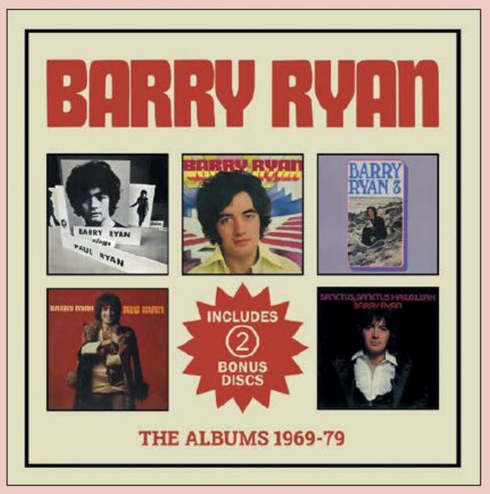
Twin Or Lose

BARRY RYAN

The Albums 1969-1979

★★★★

7T'S 5-CD BOX SET



With material mostly penned by his iconoclastic songwriting genius brother Paul, Barry Ryan was responsible for some of the most dramatic, brilliant, bonkers pop in an era with no shortage of dramatic, brilliant and bonkers pop tunes. As Bob Stanley's sleeve notes to this collection reveal, Ryan's best-remembered song 'Eloise' was literally the missing link between 'MacArthur Park' and 'Bohemian Rhapsody'. But it was also a hard act to follow, as 'Eloise' was successful precisely because it was such an unrepeatable one-off.

On *Barry Ryan Sings Paul Ryan* (1969), 'Why Do You Cry My Love?' almost matches the hit's strident intensity, while the sickly sentiments of 'My Mama' are undercut by being set to an approximation of a Hammer Horror score. When Ryan starts screaming and babbling the chorus, it's roll over Rachmaninoff, tell Freud the news. Late '69 single 'The Hunt' is still breathtakingly bizarre, and unfairly stalled at #34, but the album it opened was mostly full of the brothers' attempts at conventional grand ballads. They almost succeed, too, Barry coming over at times like an unbuttoned Scott Walker. He looked to outside writers for some of *Barry Ryan 3* ('70), including Cat Stevens for a football-chant cover of 'Wild World', but the highlight (and perhaps their finest moment overall) is Paul's astonishing 'Kitsch': a musical essay on camp with slashing strings, galloping drums, ominous choirs and morse code bleeps. Imagine a Spector-produced collaboration between PJ Proby and Susan Sontag.

***Red Man* ('71) includes the Brel-influenced political satire of the title track and the wonderfully OTT bathos of 'Ode To A Roadie' with its opening line, "Who was it who put chewing gum in my hair?", while '72's *Sanctus Sanctus Hallelujah* features Glasgow rockers The Verge pulling out Purple and Sabbath riffs on 'Storm Is Brewing' and 'Slow Down' respectively. The trippy 'I Think You Know My Name' could almost be an out-take from *Head*. This set also includes Ryan's unreleased '76 disco album and essential non-LP singles 'Love Is Love' and the pinnacle of occultist glam pop, 'Magical Spiel'. No, no, no, no? Yeah, yeah, yeah yeah yeah yeah!**

Ben Graham

Savoy Brown Blues Band Mk I in 1967

RAIN PARADE
Emergency Third Rail Power Trip
★★★★

LABEL 51 CD/LP

Rain Parade's 1983 debut needs no introduction in these pages, where an accolade such as "one of the best albums of The Paisley Underground" can only be contested based on the final specification being too reductive. (This writer would also like to add that it's time we recognise 'Talking in My Sleep' as one of the greatest album openers in the history of recorded music).

A deluxe reissue is very welcome indeed, especially when it comes with a second LP of demos and live recordings that provide a good insight into the band's psyche as the '80s underground was reclaiming a kinship with the never-really-over '60s. Among the uncovered gems, it's worth mentioning a 4-track version of 'This Can't Be Today' that accentuates the song's inner 'It's All Too Much' spirit, a 'Look Both Ways' demo that feels tuned into the world of '64 and the punky blast of surf-garage that is 'Speedway'.

Camilla Aisa

THE REAL LOSERS
Good Clean Fun
★★★★

TOTAL PUNK LP

Leeds-based combo starring bassist/vocalist C Shake, Hot Dog on pounding drums and The Hand on fret-wrecking (ir) responsibilities, The Real Losers were spawned in 1999, made a bunch of records, then quit in 2005, laying waste to many stages across the UK, Europe and US in the process. *Good Clean Fun* was their intended second album, recorded by members of The Cribs, yet despite certain tracks appearing on singles the album remained unreleased until now.

From the bold cover art lettering, and cool risograph poster inserts, plus, of course, the unapologetic, ear-damaging noise captured throughout, everything about this "greatest hits and misses" style collection screams garage-punk. No hi-fi slickness, only feedback-laced lo-fi sickness. With the likes of 'Martian Deathray', 'Time To Lose', 'Sick By You' and 'She's Outta Control', there's no mistaking that you've been truly socked in the jaw by some powerful, fun-loving odes performed by genuine don't care, won't care punks. Alright, c'mon!

Lenny Helsing

SAVOY BROWN BLUES BAND
Shake Down
★★★★

UMR/PROPER LP

Though relatively late off the mark compared to the trailblazing John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, Savoy Brown's 1967 debut vividly transports one back to the heady days of the British blues boom.

Originally released on Decca and produced by the ubiquitous Mike Vernon *Shake Down* survives as a highly effective collection of trusty blues covers and one solitary original composition. But rather than proving a weakness Savoy Brown›s talent for revitalising vintage material proves to be one of the album's principal strengths. Thus, rejuvenating fire is breathed into Willie Dixon's 'I Ain't Superstitious' and 'Let Me Love You Baby', BB King's 'Rock Me Baby', Albert King's 'Oh Pretty Woman' and John Lee Hooker's 'It's My Own Fault'. That said, Savoy Brown are arguably at their most distinctive and memorable on their moody slow-burning treatments of Jessie Mae Robinson's 'Black Night' and Don Robey's 'I Smell Trouble'.

Grahame Bent

SHELLY Y NUEVA GENERACIÓN
Shelly y Nueva Generación
★★★★

MUNSTER LP

The Madrid-based Shelly and co shone brightly but briefly on the Spanish scene in the late '60s with a trio of EPs – all collected here – that include nods to British R&B, a well-oiled Vox Continental, and a great freakbeat spin on the 'Taxman' bassline (with several songs written by bassist Miguel Angel Rojas Cerdá – aka Bibi – why not?)

Expanding this collection into a full LP is a freshly unearthed set of soul covers, apparently recorded for contemporary Spanish TV. It's a shame we don't have the footage, as existing appearances on *Telerritmo* and in Iván Zulueta's *Un, dos, tres... al escondite inglés* show that the band were spirited performers. They throw themselves into numbers by The Temptations, Stevie Wonder, The Four Tops, Aretha Franklin and Bettye Swann, and if Shelly – more comfortable with comparisons to Mariska Veres and Janis Joplin – gets a little throaty here, it's all good gutsy stuff.

Christopher Budd

THE SHIVER
Walpurgis
★★★

SOMMOR LP

The one and only album by Switzerland's The Shiver is a platter typical of the time, featuring as it does a band shifting from bluesy psychedelia to heavy-handed prog and an eye-popping HR Giger cover painting.

This 1969 release is covers-heavy, and although readings of Procol Harum's 'Repent Walpurgis', The Moody Blues' 'Leave This Man Alone' and an Animals-influenced 'Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood' show the band had some chops, muddy production lets the side down.

Why buy this when the originals are freely available is the obvious question, especially when *Walpurgis* also comes saddled with plodding blues workout 'The Peddle', which might have thrilled in '66 ("might" also means "might not") but is hopelessly anachronistic in these surroundings. The answer to that question is the strange but lovely, ethereal and hypnotic original version of 'Hey, Mr Holy Man', a spoken word piece over an angelic 'Dies Irae' Gregorian chant with hip-hop beats shipped in from the future.

Peter Gallagher

LABI SIFFRE
For The Children
★★★★

DEMON LP

Labi Siffre's '(Something Inside) So Strong' was not just a major Ivor Novello award-winning hit, but a song with a message that railed against apartheid. This should come as no surprise, as Siffre had long established himself as not only a musician and songwriter but a true poet releasing six albums between 1970 and '75, before remerging 13 years later with the biggest hit of his career.

Siffre's first four Pye releases are the focus of Demon's half-speed remasters and it's currently the turn of '73's *For The Children.* With the music largely folk-oriented ('Prayer'), but occasionally leaning towards a commercial '70s pop aesthetic on 'Someday' and 'Entertainment Value', Siffre is a singer-songwriter with a deep-seated morality tale. 'Children Of Children' and 'Let's Pretend' stand as dual centrepieces on an album of songs that Siffre claims he was "provoked" into writing. A wonderful presentation of a wonderful record.

Sarah Gregory

TAKE A LOAD OFF YOUR FEET.

Step back in time with us to 1979. Jimmy Carter is the 39th President of the United States. The Clash release London Calling and Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers release Damn The Torpedoes. Steelers defeat the Cowboys at Super Bowl XIII. The U.S. Voyager I space probe photos reveal Jupiter's rings for the first time. McDonald's introduces the Happy Meal....and Francis Ford Coppola's seminal Vietnam War epic Apocalypse Now debuts at the Cannes Film Festival.

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reviews then

CHRIS SPEDDING
Songs Without Words
★★★★

ESOTERIC CD

Recorded in 1969 and intended for release on Harvest, *Songs Without Words* was never given a UK release due to Chris Spedding's reservations about the material and his uneasiness about being labelled a jazz guitarist. Although released in Japan, that hasn't stopped this mysterious album feeling like a lost chapter in Spedding's long and varied career.

Initially a member of Pete Brown's Battered Ornaments and UK fusion pioneers Nucleus, Spedding's credentials as a cutting-edge late '60s jazzer are writ large all over these recordings. Laid down at Abbey Road with a band including Nucleus and Soft Machine drummer John Marshall and trailblazing free trombonist Paul Rutherford, the resulting material has a loose and unfinished quality to it. Opening with a wandering perambulation through The Battered Ornaments' 'Station Song', *Songs Without Words* is every note a product of the exploratory mood of the late '60s/early '70s UK jazz-fusion scene.

Grahame Bent

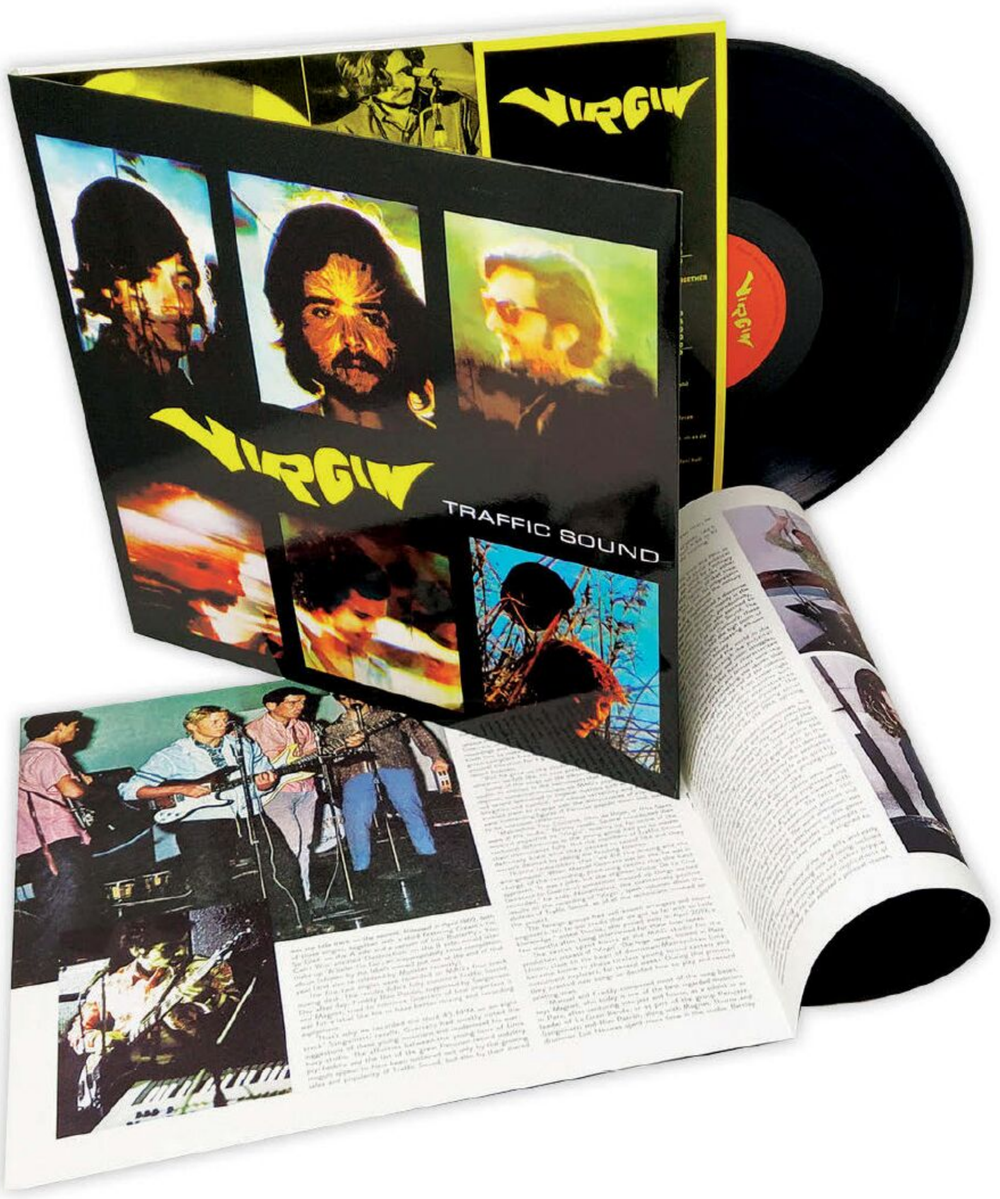
TRAFFIC SOUND
Virgin
★★★★

VAMPISOUL LP

Traffic Sound's second album represents a huge stylistic leap forward from their 1969 debut *A Bailar Go-Go,* which found them covering material by The Doors, Cream, Jimi Hendrix, Iron Butterfly and The Animals. By the time *Virgin* appeared on the horizon the following year, the band's sound had metamorphosed into a loose and at times heady amalgam of diverse psych, progressive, folk, Andean and Afro-Latin elements.

It's a rich and at times puzzlingly multi-hued blend of ingredients that speaks of the influence of contemporary US west coast sounds and maverick one-off ensembles like Traffic. This multiplicity of sources and influences is maybe best illustrated by the near unclassifiable patchwork of styles present on the spectacularly out there nine-minute 'Yellow Sea Days', the raucous neo-garage curio 'Jew's Caboose' and the all-conquering Peru-centric deep psych anthem 'Meshkalina'.

Grahame Bent



ROBIN TROWER
Bridge Of Sighs: 50th Anniversary Edition
★★★★★

CHRYSALIS 3-CD + BLURAY/2-LP

The towering *Bridge Of Sighs* remains without question the zenith of Robin Trower's career; the one where everything magically fell into place. Flawlessly produced by Trower's former Procol Harum bandmate Matthew Fisher, the atmospheric merging of hard-rock, deep blues, psych and the counterbalancing of Trower's intensely Hendrix-ified guitar sound with one time Stone The Crows bassist James Dewar's profoundly soulful vocals, made for a near perfect blend of contrasting elements.

In addition to the original eight track album this 44-track, multi-format 50th anniversary edition features a previously unheard unedited stereo mix, single versions, rehearsals, out-takes, alternative takes, instrumental versions and a May 1974 US live in the studio broadcast from The Record Plant in Sausalito. A full five decades on from the album's original release, this motherlode of pristine audio is nothing less than the sound of Robin Trower spectacularly striking gold.

Grahame Bent

THE USERS
1977-1979
★★★★★

HELL'S KITCHEN LP

Craftily put together Japanese mini-album (with obi strip), on which 'Sick Of You' alone proves these provincial punks had everything it takes to succeed alongside the Pistols, Damned, Buzzcocks *et al*. Its Raw label counterpart 'In Love With Today' also sounds as rabidly intense as when that debut single was unleashed in May 1977; a brilliant cacophony of unhinged vocals, untamed guitars and loud, violent drums. Although not as cataclysmic, the following year's 'Kicks In Style' is another raucous gem, issued on their own Warped label.

This remastered set also offers further glimpses into vocalist Phil Burkill and guitarist Chris Free's influences, away from the Stooges-style mayhem, including chunky, melodic groovers like 'Listen', 'Now That It's Over' and magical beat-punk makeover of The Who's 'It's Not True'. It's been available on CD and vinyl before, but here the urgent sounds come across beautifully tough, crisp and cool. Comes resplendent in a deadly cover shot plus illuminating sleeve note penned by early fan, The June Brides' Phil Wilson.

Lenny Helsing

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Africamore: The Afro-Funk Side Of Italy
★★★★

FOUR FLIES CD/LP

Africamore is a voyage into the lesser-known world of '70s Italian Afro-funk – and it's absolutely glorious, focusing on the sweet spot between 1973 and '78 during which the melting pot of soul, jazz, funk, South American and African musics were laying the foundations of dancefloor music for decades to come.

Afro-funk was central to this new movement, nowhere more evident than on African Revival's cover of New York dancefloor classic 'Soul Makossa'. And while this music has had a notable resurgence over the last 20 to 30 years, it's joyous that lost gems, which sound fresh and every bit as good as those tunes that are burned into our brains, continue to be unearthed. A precursor to the Italo cosmic disco scene, *Africamore* features a plethora of dancefloor doozies including the Vangelis composed 'Amore' featuring Osibisa's rhythm section, 'The Voodoo Lady' by Lara Saint-Paul and the hugely infectious 'Tabu Tuba'. Bangers for any time. Magnificent.

Sarah Gregory

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Soft Summer Breezes
★★★

NUMERO GROUP LP

What we have here are 16 very gentle examples of American late '60s soft psych; some sun-kissed, some with folk roots, and, apart from The New Colony Six and Margo Guryan, most either extremely obscure or completely unknown.

It all starts so well. Something called 'Life' by Life. A sparse but utterly delightful two-minute acoustic guitar piece, backed by gentle percussion, a mellow bass and overlaid with lyricless male harmonies. Sounds like The Constant Sound. High praise indeed, but we have no idea who they are or when it was originally released. (It's not the Canadian or Swedish groups of the same name.) JC Horton sounds like the young Cat Stevens, whilst Attila & The Huns, The Sound Control, The Goodthings and the NC6 make excellent contributions.

Alas, this album lacks any supporting information whatsoever – nothing but titles and artists. No photos, no musician names, no years, no producers and, rather unforgiveably, no songwriting credits.

Vic Templar

The Speed Of Sound: A Cornucopia it starts in May and lasts all year

a future-retro-modernist harmonic and kaleidoscopic sonic patchwork quilt of interlocking grooves made for the scene, not the herd

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Return Of The Four fathers

THE PRISONERS
Morning Star
★★★★★

OWN UP CD/LP

While news of The Prisoners' 2022 live dates came as something of a surprise, few, if any of us could have imagined that the reunion would prove so amicable and joyous for the four group members that it would lead almost immediately to the making of a new album. Of course, behind the giddy excitement at the news, alarm bells began ringing. Thirty-seven years is a long time, and a lot of water (not to mention a couple of ill-fated reunions) has passed under the bridge. A formidable reputation is at stake. Lads, don't balls this up.

Thankfully, the brow-beaten quartet that bowed out with vitriolic 1986 swansongs 'Pop Star Party' and 'Happiness For Once' appear not only to have patched up their differences, but fallen in love with each other all over again. The Prisoners were always a pop group trapped inside the body of a garage band, and their understanding of The Song shines more brightly than ever on *Morning Star*. Even the album's title brims with positivity. Working in full collaboration, Graham, Allan, James and Johnny have fashioned 12 songs (14 on the CD edition) that recall the highlights of yore while bringing newfound peace and maturity.

If opener 'This Road Is Too Long' ploughs the tough mod-rock that characterised much of the group's work, lead single 'Going Back' (not the exercise in reflection that its title suggests) comes on like 'Won't Get Fooled Again'-era Who, complete with circular keyboard riff and pounding drum breaks. The title track is calm, contemplative and philosophical; 'Winter In June' a blue-eyed soul headrush; 'My Wife', featuring one of two James lead vocals, an unabashed heart-on-sleeve love song. Of course, it wouldn't be a Prisoners record without the heads-down swagger ('Save Me', 'Something Better') and the obligatory sci-fi instrumental ('The Green Meteor'). There are hooks, harmonies and heart-tugging melodies at every turn – pretty much everything we loved about The Prisoners in the first place is here in spades and, as a first-generation fanboy who hasn't stepped out of their various orbits since, this makes me very happy indeed.

Andy Morten

Taylor, Day, Crockford and Symons make good their escape

ANANDAMMIDE
Eura
★★★★

ANANDAMMIDE / SULATRON LP/CD

The artful weaving together of synthetic and acoustic textures is a task thath continues to occupy the minds of many musicians, including that of Italian singer-songwriter Michele Moschini and his pan-European band of contributors.

Eura is something of a disc of two halves, Anandammide's early music and folk influences being very evident on the A-side, with Audrey Moreau's flute to the fore. A delicate balance is struck with Moschini's synths and Pascal Vernin's fretless bass, and it all works surprisingly well. The second half of the disc gets both more proggy on the title track's extended guitar solo, and in places more soporific, 'The Orange Flood' being the standout, a mixture of strings and synths over a beguilingly lovely set of chords. Recorded across Europe, *Eura* nevertheless betrays no disjointedness either in production or performance – a feat by itself. This is all accomplished stuff, and grows with repeat listens.

Christopher Budd

THE AR-KAICS
See The World On Fire
★★★

FEEL IT / BACHELOR CD/LP

Eight tracks in 40 minutes suggests a new direction for the Richmond, VA quartet who wowed the Funtastic Dracula Carnival attendees on a 2016 trip to Europe. Back then, with Patty Conway behind the drum-kit, they delivered a set of genuine lo-fi Velvets-style three-minute garage. In a Spanish weekend with The Mummies on the bill they shone very brightly.

Eight years is a long time, just ask The Beatles, and The Ar-Kaics return with a new drummer and a totally different sound and focus. Sure, the garage roots are still audible, but it's a world-weary, doomy, AOR cloud that hangs over the lengthy songs. I'm not totally on board with this new approach, but you might be. There are highlights: 'Outsider' and 'Stone Love', bringing to mind the Stones' 'Jigsaw Puzzle', and on the nine-minute 'Never Ending' and 'Fools Are Gone', singer Johnny Ward echoes a wistful '70s John Lennon.

Vic Templar

THE BARON FOUR
Outlying
★★★★

CHAPUTA! LP

If you're looking for a modern take on the music that makes that makes those *Pebbles*, *Nuggets* and *Back From The Grave* compilations so addictive you'd be well advised to cast your ears in the direction of this fine release. Formed by members of The Jack Cades, Embrooks, Capellas and Galileo 7, this outfit achieves a cavernous sound buzzing and blitzing with memorable riffs.

The group also showcase their adaptability and affinity with the British R&B sounds of the early '60s on 'That Beat When You Walk', an organ-backed blueswailing cracker, while the swoony, sweeping 'Trying' contrasts nicely with the machine gun attack of 'You Need Me'. Pulling together the sonic feel of a period during which bands were expanding both their repertoires and their minds, The Baron Four seem to have absorbed the very best of their influences, while eschewing any of the unnecessary conceits and foibles of those changing times.

Henry Hutton

CALDWELL
Caldwell
★★★★

POPCLAW CD/LP

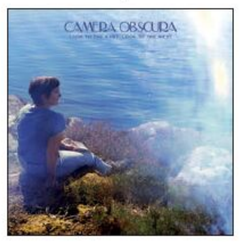
The salvo of 'No Flowers Today' and 'Love Confessions' that opens Kevin Caldwell's solo debut is as vivid a flashback to late '60s technicolour pop as we've heard here at *Shindig!* since Electric Looking Glass and Mooon's recent outings. Formerly of New Orleans post-punk oddballs and Rise Above signings The Planchettes, Caldwell couldn't be more brazen about his mission statement if he tried. And he has tried. A *lot*.

For this, the inaugural release on Rise Above's new pop imprint, he serves up eight tightly-constructed, ornately-arranged, richly-detailed odes to the (just) post-psychedelic production line pop that populated the charts of 1968. Whether he's exhuming the spirit of DDDBM&T and Gary Walker & The Rain or reaching for choice Euro deep cuts and Kinks-ish frivolity, Caldwell possesses enough chops of his own to ensure that no matter how heavy the homages get, his own voice and unique perspective remain front and centre.

Andy Morten

CAMERA OBSCURA
Look To The East, Look To The West
★★★★★

MERGE CD/LP



Our favourite Scottish pop group returns from a lengthy hiatus following the death of keyboardist Carey Lander. Two teaser singles, 'Big Love', a slide-driven country-rocker with nods to Waylon Jennings and Sandy Denny, and 'We're Going To Make It In A Man's World', a cooing heartbreaker with slyly sarcastic lyrics and killer chorus, introduce a stronger country influence.

A nostalgic journey on a musical roundabout, songs express hope for new beginnings and a promising future, coming full circle via both the album's all-encompassing title and cover star Fiona Morrison, who also graced 2001 debut *Biggest Bluest Hi-Fi*. 'Denon' is a gorgeous lookback to infectious '60s girl-group love songs and 'Pop Goes Pop' is a bubbly confection with a groovy organ solo from newcomer Donna Maciocia backing another one of Traceyanne Campbell's trademark killer melodies. This is not a comeback, but a triumphant look ahead.

Jeff Penczak

ISOBEL CAMPBELL
Bow To Love
★★★★

COOKING VINYL CD/LP

"The world is a mess," quips Isobel Campbell on '4316', one of her new album's highlights, while sounding something like Margo Guryan singing with Stereolab. On *Bow To Love,* the former Belle & Sebastian lynchpin doesn't shy away from facing today's troubles and worries, but the result – a work of deep, pondering wit and superb taste that sits evenly between pastoral psych-folk and dreamy *avant*-pop – packs enough imagination and grace to offer hopefulness.

Opener 'Everything Falls Apart' (described as an elegy to the patriarchy) is surely the most elegant and delicate instance of someone repeatedly singing "You son of a bitch". With its narcotic strumming, bubbling electronics and spacey effects, 'Dopamine' is an ode to slow-burning pleasures with highly hypnotic powers. For the closer, Campbell turns Dire Straits' 'Why Worry' into a whispered-in-confidence lullaby that could pass for an early '90s twee pop act reworking a lost Nico track.

Camilla Aisa

JOSIENNE CLARKE
Parenthesis, I
★★★★

CORDUROY PUNK CD/LP

Following last year's *Oneliness,* re-recording and reclaiming songs from her back catalogue, award-winning British singer-songwriter Clarke's 10th album is a new beginning of sorts, with fresh perspectives couched in traditional influences and subtle innovations.

The single 'Most Of All' is classic coffee-house folk, dismissing a lover who can "write a beautiful love song but can barely sing at all", and Joni and Sandy are frequently recalled throughout. But there's a darker edge to the ominous, circling hex of 'Do You Know Now' and the raw 'Forbearing', both underpinned by unsettling synth drones, while 'Looking Glass' has a jazz-folk feel reminiscent of Carmel. With recurring themes of the courage required to speak honestly and be yourself, this is a deeply personal album for Clarke. The Kristin Hersh-like 'Double-Edged Sword' shows she knows the risks she's taking, but as the title track suggests, hiding in the margins is no longer an option.

Ben Graham

ROB CLARKE
Blues Beats And Brel
★★★★

ALDORA BRITAIN CD/DL

In case you don't already know, Rob Clarke is a stalwart of the Liverpool music scene who has performed and recorded all over the place, including Nashville, Tennessee, which should give you some idea of his musical proclivities: not just a love of his heritage scene – pop, psych and all – but a passion for far-flung country and blues.

A former frontman for electric blues-rock outfit The Wooltones, Clarke's solo material tends to be more restrained, resulting in this impressive new release, which does exactly what it says on the tin. Less is definitely more here, and the mainly acoustic nature of the album allows the songs to breathe. Such good songs too: 'Cheapskate', an atmospheric blues rap that could have comfortably squeezed onto the soundtrack of the De Niro movie *Taxi Driver*, or the Jacques Brel-esque 'You Don't Talk', a swoonsome Liege-via-Liverpool romantic lament complete with accordion.

Chris Twomey

CRUMBS
You're Just Jealous
★★★★

SKEP WAX CD/LP

Leeds quartet Crumbs have been baking their sophomore album throughout the pandemic and the resulting dozen breathless punky tracks flash by at breakneck speed, many barely topping two minutes. With influences as diverse as Gang Of Four, The Go Go's, Bauhaus, The Raincoats and Delta 5, there's something for everyone who loves quirky, syncopated music.

The title track kicks things off with a funky bass solo from Jamie Wilson before Ruth Gilmore jumps in with some forceful spoken/shouted vocals wrapped around snappy drumming from Gem Prout and razor-sharp guitar courtesy Stuart Alexander. We're hearing a bit of Wire battling Au Pairs for pride of place, with the latter's 'Too Many Creeps' revival more viciously vitriolic than the original. If you remember sweaty club nights pogoing away to high energy poppy punk, then Crumbs are for you. Try the funky punky 'Stab Alley' and 'Mambo No 6' for maximum thrills.

Jeff Penczak

GOBLYNS
Hunki Bobo
★★★

CRAZYSANE CD/LP

Berlin/Amsterdam-based instrumental groove trio GOBLYNS cite some interesting influences in their bio, including Kikagaku Moyo, The Meters, WITCH, CAN and Surprise Chef. Two of the most obvious starting points for their muscular updates on vintage guitar instrumentals, The Shadows and Dick Dale, are conspicuous by their absence. It was none other than Jimi Hendrix who was famously heard to say, "You'll never hear surf music again" on his sci-fi/psych burn-up 'Third Stone From The Sun'. Well, as it happens you *do* get to hear surf music again, except here it's been revamped, reconfigured and remodulated for a whole new audience.

Released as the follow up to last year's *This Is Spaghettification* EP GOBLYNS' debut long-player finds them trading in impressively big cuts, served up generously marinated in an aromatic cocktail of reverb, echo, fuzz and spacy resonance.

Grahame Bent

HALO MAUD
Celebrate
★★★★

HEAVENLY CD/LP

You may have heard Halo Maud singing on the recent Chemical Brothers album, but to truly appreciate the multi-instrumentalist and producer's talents you need to hear this joyful 12-song set. *Chanson*, dream-pop and ambient electronica merge, putting one in mind of Bjork, Stereolab and Melody's Echo Chamber. The latter perhaps unsurprising as Maud is a former member of said band.

Recorded between Paris and Los Angeles, *Celebrate* is spirit-lifting progressive pop with ideas packed into each musical bar. The backing beneath Maud's crystal-clear vocals is full of dynamic shifts – from presciently quiet to full-on percussive bombast.

There are linguistic shifts too – lyrics switch between English and her native French, often within the same song. If you've only time to dip into a couple of songs try the futuristic psych of 'Terres Infinies' or the ambiently layered voices on the cover of Fred Frith's 'Iceberg' featuring fellow French artist Flavien Berger.

Duncan Fletcher

RICHARD HAWLEY
In This City They Call You Love
★★★★

BMG CD/LP

"Don't know if I'm ever gonna change," Sheffield's coolest son Richard Hawley croons on the meditative 'Deep Waters' – but solo album #10 mines leaner, more stripped-back territory after 2019's sweeping *Further.*

Menacing lead single 'Two For His Heels' is a brilliant opening gambit. Built around a bone-rattling riff and bursts of Link Wray brutality, it's surely getting picked up for a noir-ish crime drama sometime soon. Elsewhere, Hawley keeps it sonically lighter, concentrating on his trademark melodic, direct songwriting. There's featherlight rockabilly (The Elvis/Jordanaires shuffle of 'Hear That Lonesome Whistle Blow'), stately '60s seaside pop (the lovely, skittering 'Prism In Jeans'), and affecting balladry ('I'll Never Get Over You', the closing ''Tis Night').

The stand-out is 'People', a hushed love letter to Sheffield. Built around a simple folky motif, it's both celebratory and bittersweet – a perfect, quiet anthem for a loud, industrial city.

Martin Ruddock

KHRUANGBIN
A La Sala
★★★

DEAD OCEANS CD/LP

First catching listeners' attention through an original blend of neo-psych, Thai funk, dub, surf-rock and vintage soundtracks, by

Continues over

now Khruangbin have fully absorbed those influences, patenting a sound that's entirely and unmistakably their own – so much so, in fact, that bumping into new artists making Khruangbin-esque music isn't rare.

Full-length outing number four arrives after inspired collaborations (Vieux Farka Touré, Leon Bridges) and some delectable live releases, signalling the Texan trio's intention to get back to basics. With subtler rhythms and a fully relaxed air, *A La Sala* offers its fair share of sonic pleasures (the ultra-smooth 'May Ninth', the climatic 'A Love International', closer 'Les Petits Gris' with its hushed, jazzy piano-led detour), still presenting Khruangbin as vibe weavers extraordinaire. Yet one can't help but miss the trippy spells of *Con Todo El Mundo* and *Mordechai*'s earworms. At times, the music is in danger of fading into the background.

Camilla Aisa

LA LUZ
News Of The Universe
★★★★★

SUB POP CD/LP

At once dizzyingly infinite and intensely personal, La Luz's fifth studio album is both a valediction and an elegy. Personnel-wise, a farewell to a bassist and keyboardist, and a welcome for a drummer and producer/keys player, while lyrically swimming in the deep waters churned by the birth of guitarist and songwriter Shana Cleveland's son and her subsequent breast cancer diagnosis.

We explore universes parallel to those inhabited by Flaming Lips and Fleet Foxes. Lush (and Lush-like) harmonies slide and twine over sci-fi synthesisers and black-hole dark psychedelia. 'Poppies'' Lemon Pipers-esque baroque stardust is laced with threat, while 'Dandelions' teeters on the edge of hysteric madness, charting the flowers' seasonal shift from "suns" to "moons". But perhaps the loveliest track on the album is the heart-breaking, country-tinged sigh of 'I'll Go With You'.

Written, produced, engineered and mastered entirely by women, *News Of The Universe* luxuriates in collaborative experimentation while fixing birth, life and death in an unflinching gaze.

Kate Hodges

THE LOVE EXPLOSION
Soft Brain
★★★★

SELF-RELEASED CD

Self-described middle-aged post-rave comedown music from Australia, the latest Love Explosion release evokes the mid-80s beginnings and heyday of British indie music, when post-punk bedroom bands were engineering a ramshackle psychedelic revival and pub function spaces were converted into an approximation of UFO with kitsch projections and a few strategically placed lava lamps.

The chiming 'Out To Sea' is Syd Barrett meets the gentler side of C86, while the sitar-flecked 'Honey, Be' recalls Spacemen 3 in horizontal mode, and 'The Brian Johnson Massacre' not only has a cheeky 'You Shook Me All Night Long' refrain but mines the same minor-key shoegaze strums as early BJM. 'Things You're Thinking' meanwhile is introspective self-help skiffle. Slow, unhurried, devoid of drums and with a deceptive dry wit, *Soft Brain* is a must for fans of Felt, The Loft and their melodic, literary kind, and the perfect soundtrack for one more summer of love.

Ben Graham

THE LOVELY EGGS
Eggsistentialism
★★★★

EGGS CD/LP

Casey Raymond's cover artwork is wacky, dense, skewed, gleefully in-your-face – like a glimpse of one of *Rick & Morty*'s alternate universes. In other words, a perfect distillation of the aesthetic and philosophy that The Lovely Eggs stand for.

Eggsitentialism, their first album since 2020, is a perfectly scrambled punk-psych-pop rollercoaster. Less lo-fi than previous works, it remains intoxicating and exhilarating. The intro kicks things off with sci-fi synths and what sounds like beatific (if slightly eerie) meows, soon to be interrupted by the quintessentially Lovely Eggs attack of 'Death Grip Kids', where Holly Ross's introductory lines make Johnny Rotten look like a country gentleman. A much fucked-up present is faced openly and loudly on *Eggsistentialism*, but the album also chronicles the couple's realisation that vulnerability can be an equally powerful driving force, their music revealing a new contemplative, hooky side that at times recalls Alvvays.

Camilla Aisa

The Lovely Eggs celebrate their new albumen

MISTY LANES
Colourless Green Ideas
★★★

THIRD EYE STIMULI LP

Misty Lanes is the creative *nom-de-plume* of Steven W Schouten, a musician based in Sydney. This is his second full-length outing following 2017's self-titled debut. Taking inspiration from '60s mavericks such as The 13th Floor Elevators, Brian Wilson, Kinks and Bee Gees, along the writings of Noam Chomsky, *Colourless Green Ideas* is an album of lo-fi bedroom psych made all the more charmingly lysergic by the sounds of Schouten's recently acquired Mellotron Micro.

Despite being five years in the making, it all sounds spontaneous and not overwrought. With Schouten knowingly adhering to the naivety and pure spirit that one gets from first demos. Highlights include the almost-rock of 'The Glorious Ones', the quirky pop of 'Would You Believe?' and 'A Guardian Angel Makes A Small Breakfast' – a contender for best song title of the year that has a backward tape intro, catchy chorus and more jangle than a rich man's pocket.

Duncan Fletcher

THE PEARLFISHERS
Making Tapes For Girls
★★★★

MARINA CD/LP

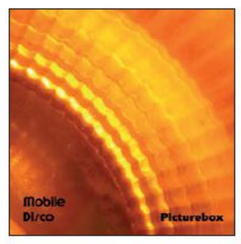
Though they've been around for what in music industry terms is an eternity, The Pearlfishers never seem to break out beyond their indie cult status. Whether that changes because of this latest album remains to be seen, but the record does contain more than its fair share of gems and is packed with songwriter David Scott's sweetly tender vulnerable reflections.

While not veering far from the proven sonic template of largely acoustic-ish instrumentation augmented with soft but stirring orchestral flourishes, *Making Tapes For Girls* finds Scott in nostalgic and sentimental mood, looking back at formative teenage bands ('Yellow & The Lovehearts'), reckless youthful abandon ('The Wild Lives'), and learning about life through a love of records and bands ('Making Tapes For Girls'). There are namechecks for Judee Sill, The Cocteau Twins and Matthew Sweet, along with an alternative Scottish national anthem in 'When The Sun Comes Back To The West Coast'.

Duncan Fletcher

PICTUREBOX
Mobile Disco
★★★★

GARE DU NORD CD



Indie: what is it good for? Observational songs about ordinary life that reveal the extraordinary in the detail, set to quirky melodies and off-kilter riffs, that's what. The tradition goes back to all your '60s kitchen-sink songwriting favourites, but contemporary bands that excel at it are few and far between.

Hurrah for Picturebox, then, who capture the Syd Barrett side of early Blur on suburban character piece 'Brightest & Best' and 'Dial A Disc', a jangling lament for a vanished past. Thirteen numbers, including two instrumentals and a very short short story, race past in 30 minutes, from the church organ and guitar fizz of 'Lennie Godber' (one for all of us Richard Beckinsdale fans) to the *Village Green*-era Kinks of '(The World Of) Autumn Feelings'. Sometimes sinister, maybe melancholy, often odd and always engaging, *Mobile Disco* is here for all your surreal storytelling, guitar bounce, DIY pop song needs.

Ben Graham

POPULATION:5
Population:5
★★★

MUZAK LP

Not to be confused with the schoolgirl-crush band who made some headway in Monterey, CA a decade or so ago, *this* version of Population 5 comprises Anglo-ortuguese blokes unlikely to grace any teenagers' walls soon, despite the presence of longtime indie sideman Phil King.

This self-titled debut is described as "playful dystopian rock 'n' roll that turns its nose at contemporary life." So, we get songs like 'Caravan Of Satellites', which give Elon Musk's Space X project a right old slagging,

Continues over

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New Distractions

by Dream Phases - NER-048

Emerging from the City of Angels' neo-psychedelic rock scene in 2017, Dream Phases reflects Calfornia's natural splendor and adventuresome inner spirit in its music.

The earthy-yet-exalted sounds of the Byrds, the Beach Boys and Crosby, Stills, Nash ,Young – as well as latter-dayartists like the Rain Parade, Elliott Smith and Autolux – figure into the band's family tree. Whilethis lineage is worth noting, what comes through in the band's latest work is an individual approach that translates the experiences of its members into something undeniably compelling.

First track to last, you can hear this vitality in New Distractions, Dream Phases' sophomore album.

Vinyl LP, Cassette, CD
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EXCLUSIVE RELEASES

LP release coming summer of 2024

Hold Drugs Dear

By R.J. Bloke - NER-049

Hold Drugs Dear is a dynamic solo effort from RJ Bloke, front man & songwriter for Los Angeles based alt-country, americana, roots rock quartet Patrolled By Radar.

These warm and urgent analog recordings feature an array of stellar guests including Alex Moore, Spencer Livingston (Livingmore), Eli Wulfmeier (Leroy from the North), Peter Curry (Los Straitjackets, Nick Lowe), and Davey Allen (Eric Burdon, Davey & The Midnights).

This collection of well-crafted poetic and melodic songs are sure to appeal to fans of Dylan, Ray Davies, Jeff Tweedy, Lennon & Paul McCartney and many more, truly magificent.

Vinyl LP, Cassette, CD
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and 'Jet Liner', which points to the hypocritical eco-preaching filthy rich who routinely fly here, there and everywhere. And the music? Well, it's perfectly serviceable garage-rock, with the occasional note of raspy blues *a la* early Stones, recorded mono on analogue 8-track tape. It's also purposefully raw, so one gets the feeling it's a lot more fun to hear live in some sweaty club in Porto, from where these guys hail.

Chris Twomey

JESSICA PRATT
Here In The Pitch
★★★★★

MEXICAN SUMMER / CITY SLANG CD/LP

Jessica Pratt's first two albums brimmed with the enticing secrecy of twilight-blessed bedroom recordings; then 2019's *Quiet Signs* found her entering a studio and broadening the sonic palette, all the time retaining an elusive, sparse atmosphere. Whereas those records wowed by virtue of an autumnal ghostliness, her latest work feels summery, the musical equivalent of a suncatcher prism.

Always a purveyor of timeless music, on *Here In The Pitch* Pratt looks simultaneously forward and back: she often conjures the golden California of baroque-pop, and isn't afraid to acknowledge its darker, alluringly sinister side either, as demonstrated on sublime opener 'Life Is', complete with 'Guess I'm Dumb' backdrop. With the gothic folk roots still working their spellbinding magic, this is Pratt at her most expansive and vital: 'By Hook Or By Crook' moves with sensuous bossa-imbued groove, 'The Last Year' pairs '60s chamber-pop's knack for lulling ear-arresting melodies with a restrained contemporary folk taste. Stunning.

Camilla Aisa

ROSALI
Bite Down
★★★★

MERGE CD/LP

Rosali Middleman returns with her fourth album of introspective Americana, backed by Mowed Sound and Destroyer keyboard player Ted Bois. The songs gathered here are an articulation of how to walk free from the wreckage of life and keep moving along the road.

There's a pleasing symmetry to the album. "I want to feel right at the end of the day." sings Middleman on 'Rewind', tender but determined to repair a broken relationship. And that's the emotional state she reaches on the closing secular prayer 'May It Be On Offer'. Sat gazing at the night sky, she reflects on lost opportunities but resolves, "No, I don't wonder / If I waste my life." The journey to that destination is one accompanied by supple and occasionally scorching guitar melodies and Middleman's intimate lilt. Meditative but never morose, this is a captivating collection that gains greater resonance with each listen.

Clive Webb

SCOTT HEPPLE & THE SUN BAND
Lammas
★★★★★

SELF-RELEASED LP

This is a bit special. "Start as you mean to go on," runs the refrain from opening track 'Junction' and the distorted, spindly riffing and fuzzy, tangly, psych wrapped around Hepple's high, keening vocals certainly set an exemplary standard that's maintained, and sometimes exceeded, over the course of the Newcastle band's second album.

'Sun And Moon' is a Sabs-like rocker with a piledriving pagan chorus, but 'Lammas', 'The Flame' and 'Killing Days' show a droning acid-folk side that's just as much a part of The Sun Band's arsenal as killer riffs. There's a post-punk sensibility on 'Friend Of Mine' (Swell Maps meet Thin Lizzy?) or the psychedelic hardcore of 'The Bridge'. The weird chaotic beauty of early Mercury Rev even sometimes surfaces amid the tight folk-metal leanings, and it's this unpredictable blend, as well as the euphoric performances and melodic songwriting, that makes this exceptional. Here comes The Sun.

Ben Graham

THE SHOP WINDOW
Daysdream
★★★★

JANGLESHOP CD/2-LP

The awkward title of this quintet's third album represents both sides of the same musical coin: "Days" showcases their jangly pop personas whilst the "Dream" disc delivers a psychedelic shoegazing experience. Singer/songwriter/producer Carl Mann wears his influences on his sleeve – from The Smiths and Felt to Slowdive and Spiritualized – and remnants of these and many other indie-pop Godheads filter into the recordings.

'I Run' is earworm city and the fun continues throughout. Cosmic Rough Riders hover over 'Lady Luck', Cracker Van Beethoven *[sic]* frolic through 'It's A High', and 'Lost & Alone' oozes Blue Rodeo and Asteroid No 4's cosmic cowboy-pop. The "Dream" sequence starts with the shimmering pseudo-Cure 'Miracles', a marshmallow overcoat envelops 'Blues', and the band's heady cornucopia of floating psychedelia, vibrating waterfalls of glistening guitars, and cotton-mouthed harmonies wrap up this stunning achievement with head-nodding illegal smiles 'Made In Heaven' for us mortals to enjoy.

Jeff Penczak

SIX ORGANS OF ADMITTANCE
Time Is Glass
★★★★

DRAG CITY CD/LP

After experiments with the Hexadic System he himself devised, some flirting with library music and unabashed prettiness (*The Intimate Landscape*) and a selection of songs to fall asleep to (*Sleep Tones*), Ben Chasny offers a new album that encapsulates many of the multitudes contained in Six Organs Of Admittance.

Time Is Glass possesses both clarity and distortion, Six Organs' knack for pastoral folk as well as its more exploratory, shadowy side. The result is by turns lulling, menacing and cosmic, a hypnotic power running through every track. The tone is set by the opening diptych: 'The Mission' is all sun-kissed finger-picking and unearthly vocals; 'Hephaestus' follows with large swathes of ambient cloudiness. On 'Slip Away', the instruments brim with Appalachian folk's sense for vastness while Chasny's singing evokes the Pacific Northwest of the '90s. 'Spinning In A River' pairs acoustic by-the-fireplace verses with the chorus's electric blasts of Pink Floyd-adjacent spaceyness.

Camilla Aisa

IAN SKELLY
Lotus And The Butterfly
★★★

AV8 CD/LP

The recent prolificity of bands like The Coral only seizes to amaze. It seems like just yesterday that the boys released not one, but two albums of new material. Seemingly, in the blink of an eye, drummer Ian Skelly has just released his third solo album. Granted, the last one came out four years ago but it's not like Skelly has been idle.

LATB lacks the freewheeling immediacy and sunny optimism of *Drifters Skyline*. Opener 'You Who Brought Me' has a much darker vibe. A distorted acid-folk rock dirge that segues into the hypnotic but subdued groove of 'Silver Rail'. The gothic melodies of 'Sweet Love' hint at the panoramic horizons Gene Clark was aiming for on *No Other*. Meanwhile, the title track is an experimental instrumental that explores new atmospheric territories. Elsewhere, Coral fans will find more familiarity with a folk-psych version of 'Rovin' Jewel', originally released on the group's *Butterfly House*.

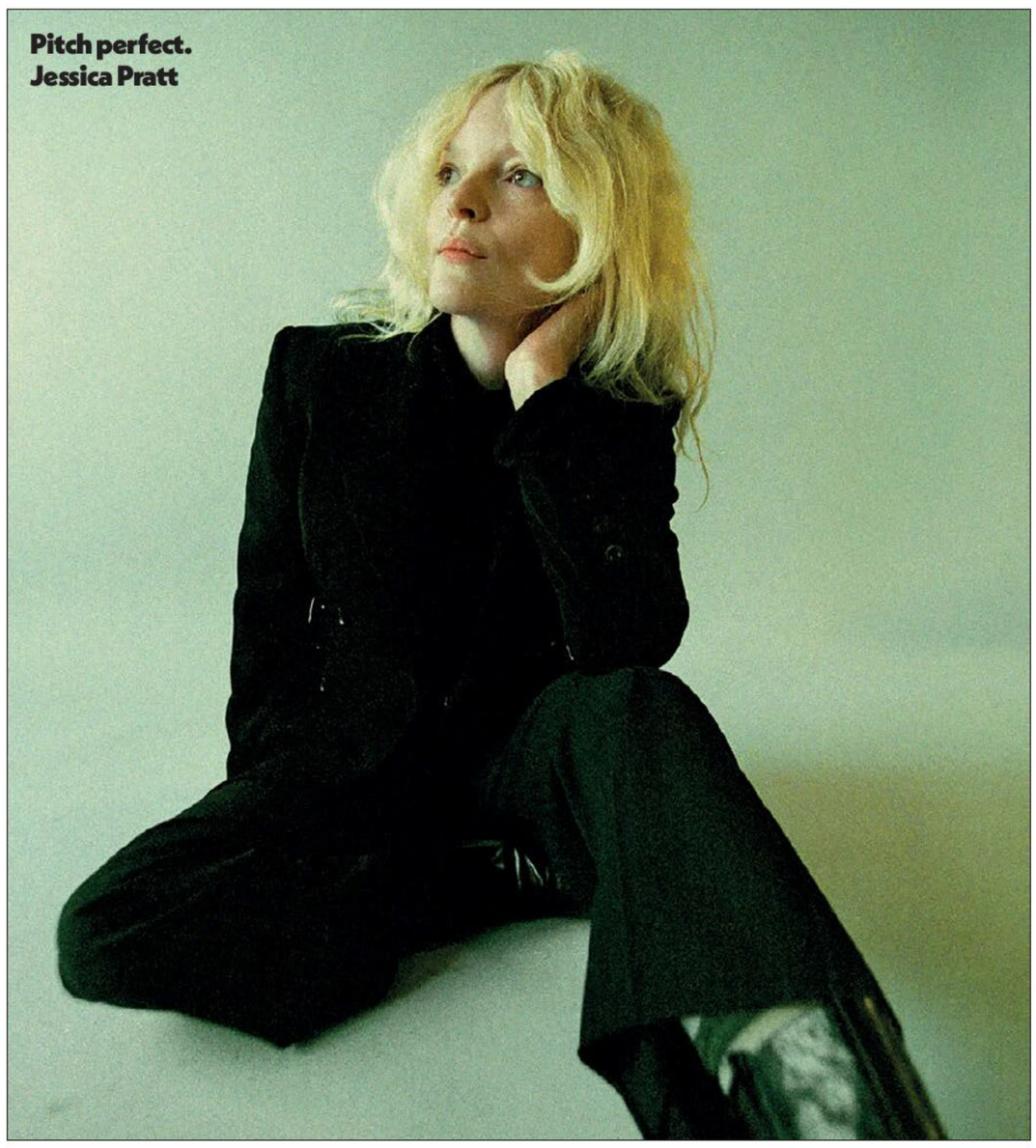
Paul Ritchie

JEFF SLATE
The Last Day Of Summer
★★★

SCHNITZEL CD

He may fall some way short of being a household name, but Jeff Slate is the archetypal "musician's musician" – someone who's worked with the likes of Pete Townshend, Sheryl Crow, Jeff Tweedy, Roger McGuinn... the list goes on. Oh, and the New Yorker also fronted the Brit mod-influenced band The Badge, who lasted for three albums and sundry releases.

A well-respected songwriter/performer by his peers, Slate never had trouble attracting famous collaborators to his solo albums, and this fourth is a case in point: this time guest artists include Dave Stewart, Earl Slick, Duff McKagan and former Style



Pitch perfect. Jessica Pratt

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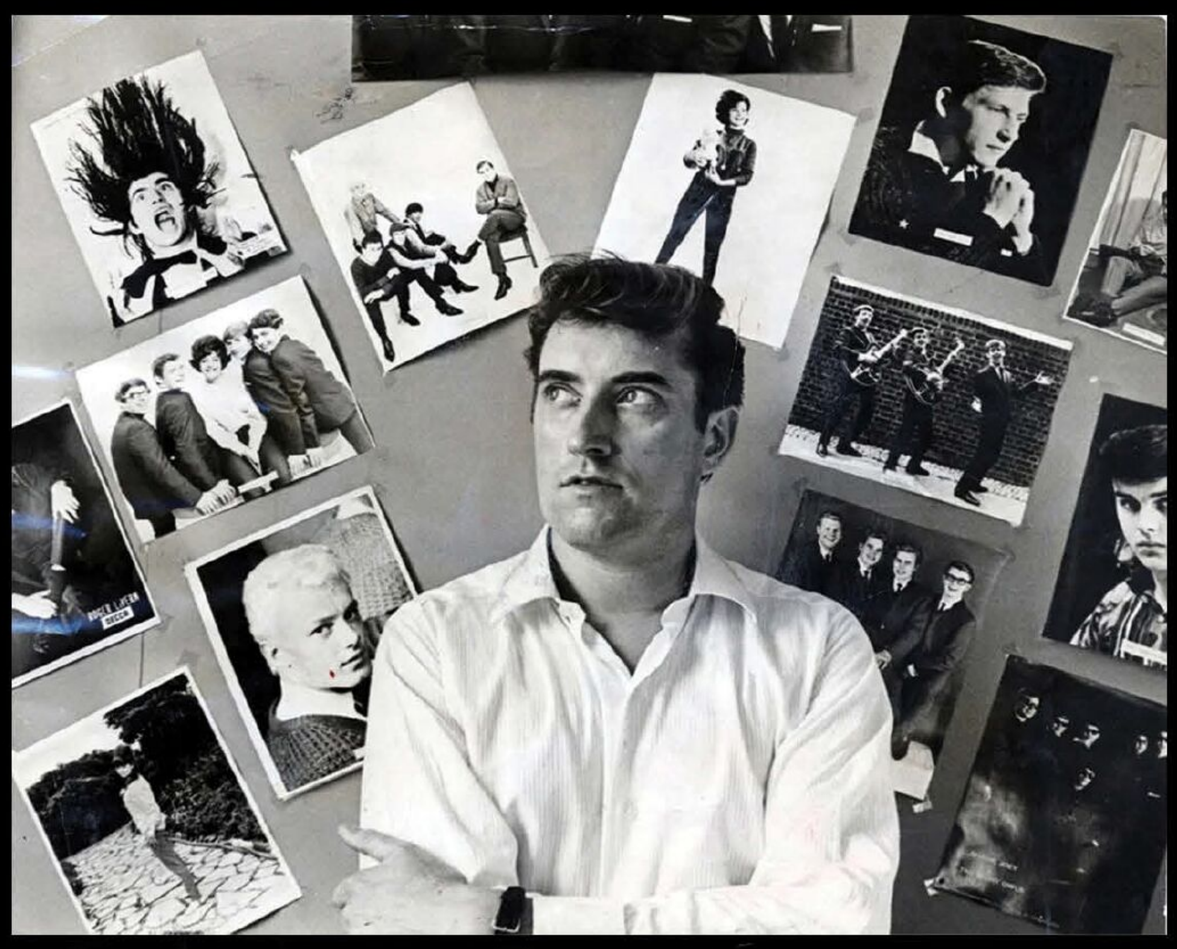

JOE MEEK

He was the strangest person in the history of popular music.
The story of his life is like an anthology of ultra-creepy, outlandish urban legends, but as his protégé Glenda Collins would sing in one of his productions, "It's hard to believe it, but it's true!"
His story is by turns, hilarious, heartbreaking and horrifying.
He is the father and eternal king of home recording. Beginning in the late 1950s, employing his own mysterious devices and methods to produce otherworldly pop records, he was technically advanced years and even decades ahead of his contemporaries.Between 1957 and 1966 he produced 21 top forty British hits.
-- He produced and composed "Telstar", the first British record recorded by a rock band to become #1 in the states. It went on to become the biggest selling instrumental of all time.
He produced "Have I the Right?", an international Merseybeat hit that predicted the sitar-based sounds of psychedelia.
-- He produced the first ever Top 20 Jazz hit in England.
...and he recorded it all in his apartment!
He is the legendary Joe Meek, and he heard a new world.

Minglewood PUBLISHING

Councillor Mick Talbot. The result is a tasteful slice of American AOR in a form that's barely changed for 40 years. It's all very pleasant, the sentiments well expressed, but if someone told you this was a lost Tom Petty album from the early '90s (their voices are remarkably similar) you wouldn't be surprised.

Chris Twomey

THE SONIC DAWN
Phantom
★★★★

HEAVY PSYCH SOUNDS CD/LP

I'm a Johnny-Come-Lately as far as The Sonic Dawn are concerned, and the name of the record label had me expecting a trip to Stonerville, but the Danish quartet's fifth long player *Phantom* presents an altogether more melodious slice of psychedelic musing.

'Pan Am' is a sonic flight to the titular airline's '60s glory days before the following decade's oil crisis, Lockerbie and lawsuits ended an era. 'Iron Bird' calls to mind Secret Machines circa *Ten Silver Drops* – surely no bad thing – and, while we're on a flight theme, 'Transatlantique' dips into (departure) lounge. That isn't to say things don't occasionally get heavy. The laidback cosmic county-blues of 'Nothing Can Live Here' (think a vaguely appreciative Dead rather than one that's out-and-out Grateful) is interspersed with some intense wig outs, and 'Think It Over' is swamp-rock Supergrass-style. *Phantom* is psych sounds for pop people.

Peter Gallagher

SUNBURNED HAND OF THE MAN
Nimbus
★★★★

THREE LOBED RECORDINGS CD/LP

Sunburned Hand Of The Man is a band that's hard to pin down. Yes, they're fundamentally experimental, but what does that even mean anymore? They embrace rock and the *avant-garde*; there's sometimes jazz, there's even funk. But why pigeonhole a band that produces some of the most innovative and thrilling music available today?

With 30 years and even more albums under their belt (notwithstanding a hiatus in the 2010s) Sunburned Hand continue to surprise and excite and their latest album, *Nimbus* is no exception. With some of the original alumni back in the fold and taking the lead from the recent podcast adventure, this is a mixture of spoken wordplay running throughout combined with lush Mellotron-driven psychedelic whimsy ('Brainticket'), some weighty psych-rock ('Walker Talker'), harmonious '60s ditties ('Ishkabibble Magoo') and an overall sense of good songwriting. *Nimbus* is a journey and an excellent addition to Sunburned's extensive back catalogue.

Sarah Gregory

THE THIRD SOUND
Most Perfect Solitude
★★★

FUZZ CLUB CD/LP

In addition to being guitarist in The Brian Jonestown Massacre, Hákon Aðalsteinsson also fronts Golden Hours (featuring members of Gang Of Four and The Fuzztones). But it's his role as leader of The Third Sound on which we focus our attention here.

The Berlin-based band's sixth LP radiates an intense dark energy, with shoegaze textures and a post-punk, somewhat goth-rock sensibility. Recorded quickly amidst a heavy touring schedule, *Most Perfect Solitude* has a propulsive drive thanks in part to new members Frankie Brœk (drums) and Wim Janssens (bass). With Aðalsteinsson's deep-range vocals set low in the mix amongst sheet metal guitars and the ominous organ chords of long-time bandmate Robin Hughes, it's akin to Phil Spector's Wall Of Sound as reimagined by a Mary Shelley-reading, effects pedal aficionado. There are moments of lightness and levity too – 'Another Time, Another Place' ups the pop quota with some guitar jangle, like The Cure at their chart-bothering best.

Duncan Fletcher

UNCLE ACID AND THE DEAD BEATS
Nell'Ora Blu
★★★★

RISE ABOVE CD/LP

There's something synchronous about Uncle Acid & The Deadbeats supporting Black Sabbath, given that they represent a similar breed of '70s occult horror-rock. With a sound that is unquestionably influenced by the Italian horror scores of Goblin, Umiliani and Ortolani, it's fitting that for their sixth outing the Deadbeats and pals have fully embraced the world of Italian cinema, creating not just a soundtrack but, to all intents and purposes, their own film in *Nell'Ora Blu.*

Shifting away from the doom-psych-garage rock vision of *Mind Control* and *Wasteland*, Kevin Starr and pals have created a record loaded with uncannily authentic-sounding *giallo*, which they've blended with their more familiar psych and guitar-heavy music, then peppered with snippets of dialogue – all in Italian of course, including some by the legendary Franco 'Django' Nero. This is a real treat for fans of soundtracks, Italian horror and modern psychedelia alike.

Sarah Gregory

CHARLIE VAUGHAN
So Profound
★★★★

PERSPECTIVE DIGITAL

As former leader of north London power-pop combo Weird Milk, Charlie Vaughan has made steady, if not spectacular, progress towards an ever-expanding fanbase. A cult following he'll be hoping to accelerate with this, his infuriatingly catchy solo mini-LP.

Drawing on some obvious influences – The Beatles, fellow Muswell Hillbillies The Kinks – Vaughan spins humorous well-observed social tales around elegant melodies, mainly played by the multi-instrumentalist himself.

They're aided by a series of quirky videos, depicting modern day nightmares, such as the curse of high street "chuggers" (clipboard holding charity muggers) and a minimalistic, arty two shot take of lead single 'So Profound', featuring Vaughan and, er, an egg. If it sounds strange, the visuals are deliberately designed to throw you off course. The important thing is, the music stands alone very confidently: jazzy swing-pop mixed with crunchier power stuff, and ultimately reminiscent of so many of our favourite things.

Chris Twomey

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Best Of Rebels Volume 5: Freak Yer Ears Out
★★★★

RAVING POP BLAST CD/LP

This latest collection in RPB's ongoing *Best Of Rebels* series features a sometimes mad and motley crew hailing from near and far. It's perhaps not the strongest volume yet, but it's sure as hell the most widely-cast and musically varied.

For starters we have Edinburgh-based garage riot-rockers Thee Girl Fridays who give us 'Too Much Of A Good Thing', there's the return of the rockin' Mudd Club, and The Howler Munkees bring some semblance of direction with the coolly downcast 'Looking Out My Window'. Sweden's Maharajas lie somewhere between or beyond pub-rock and powerpop. Similarly, Gas Kunst's 'Cinematic Ocean View' straddles slacker/indie-rock boundaries but overall belongs in neither camp. The defiantly lo-fi 'Creatures' by Reverse Cowgirls works well in such eclectic company, and album closer 'Stick It Up Your Art!' is a bonkers, oddball electro-punk protest by masked threesome Da Goins. Best advice is to delve in and taste for yourself.

Lenny Helsing

PAUL WELLER
66
★★★★★

POLYDOR CD/LP

Solo album 17 from Paul Weller, *66* coincides with the great man's 66th birthday. Still restless, he's brought in a bigger paintbox of collaborators but mainly it's about the melodies, arrangements, unexpected chord turnarounds and sonic curveballs.

'Flying Fish' is a wholly-unexpected euphoric Philly-disco stomper, while the dreamy French Waltz of 'My Best Friend's Coat' (swirling arrangements by Le Superhomard's Christophe Vaillant) is one of PW's loveliest melodies in years. The celestial choir of Say She She grace the gorgeous, spacey 'In Full Flight', while a re-recording of Monks Road Social collaboration 'Rise Up Singing' reboots Weller's '80s soul era to great effect. Match ball goes to long-standing saxman/flautist Jacko Peake, who scatters smokey '70s soul-jazz flourishes (the rueful 'Nothin'', the jaunty 'Sleepy Hollow', and tense, almost Floyd-y 'Burn Out') while gifting parping licks to the rockers (notably glammy live favourite 'Jumble Queen'). Happy birthday Paul. Thanks for inviting us.

Martin Ruddock

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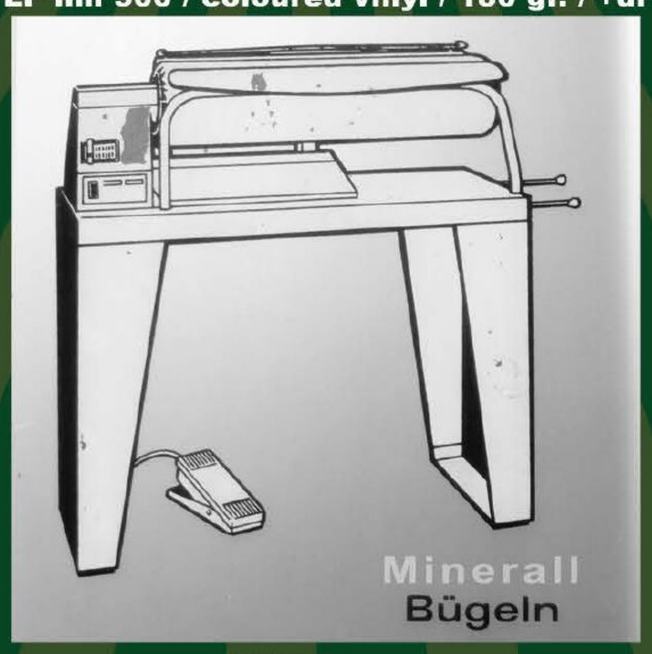

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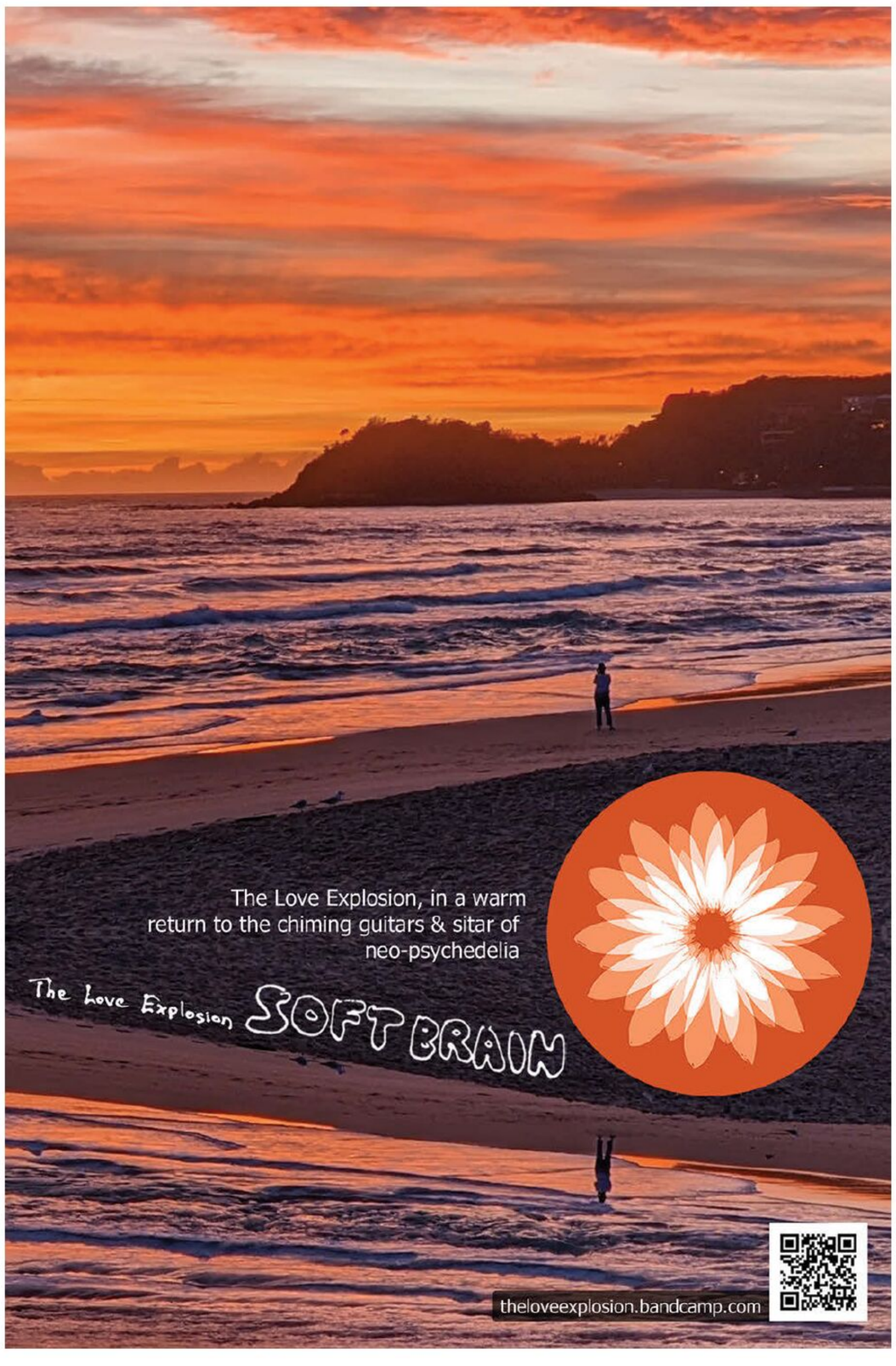


GOODCHILDE
Email Female / Hang Up
★★★★

SPINOUT NUGGETS

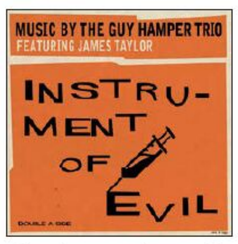
When party covers band Johnny & The Bandits decided to write and record their own compositions they determined that a name change was required. Thus they mutated into Goodchilde, with a strong Medway family tree consisiting of Allan Crockford (lead guitar), Glen Prangnell (rhythm guitar, Vocals), Jon Barker (bass, vocals) and Wolf Howard (him again, drums) plus, on this session, Matt Brewer on Hammond. Following two albums and a single the band decided to call it a day, and the two tracks on this slice of wax come from Goodchilde's final, unreleased recording session.

How these recordings have taken so long to reach the light of day is a mystery, as they're fine slices of song-driven garage-y rock 'n' roll with a faint tinge of psychedelia. 'Email Female' just edges it for punchy quality but the flip contains a stunning breakdown section with some delightfully frantic drumming.

Henry Hutton

THE GUY HAMPER TRIO FEATURING JAMES TAYLOR
Instrument Of Evil / Incense Rising From A Censer
★★★★

DAMAGED GOODS



Formed by Billy Childish and incorporating wife Julie on bass and Wolf Howard on drums, the line-up on this release also boasts legendary Hammond player James Taylor, saxophonist Anna Jordanous and trumpeter Tom Morley.

The topside of this 45 drips with spy thriller cool as the musical performances wander away then return to the underlying theme and in the process manage to reference the unlikely trio of Elmer Bernstein, Jet Harris and Dr Watson. The compelling result almost demands that the listener should imagine a disillusioned, trenchcoat-clad Richard Burton emerging from an oily East German mist. Flipside 'Incense Rising From A Censer' is the type of track in which you can submerge yourself, an intricate swirling thing of beauty and a pleasurable contrast. This pool of musicians knits together supremely well, and more cuts of this standard are eagerly awaited.

Henry Hutton

LES KITSCHENETTE'S
Algorythm 'n' Blues EP
★★★★

SOUNDFLAT

Featuring a cool combination of two original compositions alongside two distinct, and very different, cover versions, this is French-dwelling aggregation Les Kitschenette's serving up a solid, deliciously varied EP.

Much like their French-Canadian cousins Les Pommes de Lune did a year or two back on their stellar rendition of The Status Quo's 'Pictures Of Matchstick Men', so these here Kitsch-y ones turn in a similarly far-out, fabulous interpretation of Traffic's early riser 'Paper Sun'. It's fair to say they also pack a welcome garage punch into a raucous remake of the Clovers/ Searchers winner 'Love Potion No 9', here given the title 'Breuvage del Amor'. Their own creations, 'Le Poison' and taught instrumental 'Rodeo', prefer an earlier rock 'n' twist beat sound with R&B and surf flavours to the raunchier psych and garage angles of their chosen covers, yet manage to remain confident, focused and pin sharp throughout.

Lenny Helsing

THE LIQUORICE EXPERIMENT
Pretty Baby / Rattlesnake
★★★★

DISQUES ROGUE

These London-based Spaniards have released several singles, an album and numerous digital tracks since forming in 2017.

'Pretty Baby' is a revved-up re-recording of a track from last year's debut album, *How Many Lies*, eschewing the slower, bluesier swerve of the original for a rough and tumble swagger with a tougher vocal and a cleaner production that brings out that killer earworm of a three-chord rumble guitar riff. Flip it over and do the 'Rattlesnake' shake to this Bo Diddley stomper, complete with hand claps, Stonesy grit, and a slippery slope

soul on 45

PAUL RITCHIE digs the latest batch of Kent 45s

The sweet soul of **SLYVIA & THE BLUE JAYS** had Ian Levine raving when he debuted '**Put Me In The Mood**' (★★★★★) on the 2015 *Solid Stax Sensations* CD comp. A slinky piano motif reminiscent of Archie Bell & The Drells' 'I Just Can't Stop Dancing', funky drums and cute vocal makes this track the pick of the bunch here. On the flip is an even more recent discovery. The mid-tempo '**Standing In The Safety Zone**' by **THE SOUL CHILDREN** has the same driving groove of The Staple Singers' 'Respect Yourself'.

Silky smooth vocalist **CLYDENE JACKSON** (think Barbara Lewis's 'The Stars') recorded for Ray Charles Crossover imprint. '**I Need Your Love**' (★★★★) is a slick, finger poppin' modern soul dancer with an infectious smooth jazz flavour. Jazz-tinged B-side, 'We're In Love' has a slower, atmospheric, almost Balearic vibe.

Modernists may prefer the suave, swinging elegance of '**Night Bloomin' Jasmin**'' by crooner **JESSE DAVIS**. File next to the likes of Andy Williams' 'House Of Bamboo' and Troy Dodds' 'The Real Thing'. The track is paired with the 'Fever'-like bluesy instrumental '**Tricky Too**' by **GUS JENKINS** (★★★). A piano-based jazz-tinged dancer with stabbing brass lines.

Dave Hamilton's Detroit productions are the definition of raw and funky. Two of his prize jewels were female singers **LITTLE ANN** and **TOBI LARK**. The sublime soul dancer '**Who Are You Trying To Fool**' (★★★★) is coupled with the mid-tempo 'The Smile On Your Face'. From the latter, the seedy funk groove of '**Sweep It Out In The Shed**' (★★★★) is paired with sultry soul ballad 'Challenge My Love'.

Two atypical Dave Hamilton tracks from Detroit legend **MELVIN DAVIS** are issued on a Ke Ke repro label. The New Breed R&B-style '**Wedding Bells**' (★★★) and the twisting good time blues of 'It's No News' both date from 1964.

Finally, LA diva **TY KARIM** originally released a sumptuous slice of modern soul with an Afrocentric message called '**Wear Your Natural, Baby**' (★★★★) under a pseudonym. 'Keep On Doin' Whatcha' Doin'', issued under her real name, has a similar vibe with sweeping strings and a deep snaky groove.

Natural woman
Ty Karim

slide guitar backbone that congas across the room with evil intent for a raucous good time. Brian Jones is no doubt smiling approvingly.

Jeff Penczak

THE LOONS

High & Lonesome (Like Jimmy Reed Said) / Daffodils Or Despair

★★★★

DISQUES ROGUE

Readers of our Mike Stax *20 Questions* feature in issue 140 may recall a reference to a new single from his longtime garage rockers The Loons – and here it is. For nearly 30 years Stax and his fellow Loonies have set the world afire with their rollicking psychedelic garage beat across four albums and nearly a dozen singles.

As the title of their latest suggests, they're not averse to tossing in some tasty blues licks, although the psychedelic blueprint is still present from the opening lyric: "Your mind is leaving this world." Screaming guitars and harmonica, snotty vocals, thundering bass, and a galloping backbeat propel the track along at a typically breakneck pace. The flip is more melodic and poppy with room for another bleeding guitar solo and stomping keyboards, recalling the Stones and Pretty Things in their mid-60s prime.

Jeff Penczak

MFC CHICKEN

Bear-Size Skeeters / Skeeterin'

★★★★

CHAPUTA!

Whether seriously intending to soundtrack a forthcoming movie or not, London-based party-style suavesters MFC Chicken are definitely bang on the money here. It's a great, ridiculous hoot of a topsider, as well as a rockingly fine flipside into the bargain.

'Bear-Size Skeeters' appears to reference giant, bear-sized mosquitoes, which, in the imagined movie plot, are flying around, terrorising innocent bystanders and any liquor-loving partygoers (and those noisy rock dudes too) as they create untold, horrific chaos. "Bafflingly big bloodsucking terrors of the sky," indeed! Whatever, MFC Chicken are the perfect fit for such a wheeze, coming on like some vintage-dwelling hot-shot US rock 'n' roll combo, all sizzling guitar licks, juicy drums and fervent rhythmic textures. 'Skeeterin', meanwhile, keeps everything simmering nicely, its undeniable charm lying somewhere between the moody ambience, surf-exotica essence and sleazy sax riffs, all of which can be heard oozing forth from their entertaining musical pores.

Lenny Helsing

tracks

CAMILLA AISA rounds up this month's digital downloads and stray oddities

Beachwood Sparks

Familiar faces and familiar mellowness... yes, it's actually them! **BEACHWOOD SPARKS** are back, making new music together for the first time in 12 years. '**Torn In Two**' packs all the elements that made the band a *Shindig!* favourite all those years ago and, deep at the heart of the west coast cosmic rock, unveils a certain late '80s indie-pop flavour.

Crisp jangling guitars introduce **LIGHTHEADED**'s latest single, named after three of the ten most beautiful words picked by American lexicographer Wilfred J Funk in the early '30s. '**Dawn Hush Lullaby**' is as lovely and soothing as the title suggests. Oh, and there's the pairing of Rickenbacker and Viola bass again. A guarantee.

Speaking of guitar tones to fall for, bossa-worthy arpeggios make **MEI SEMONES**' '**Kabutomushi**' instantly beguiling. Soft, daydreamy vocals chime in, singing both in Japanese and, near the end, English. The title may come from a species of rhinoceros beetle found in continental Asia, but what you hear is more akin to the graceful butterfly.

"You know I still remember," we hear over a delicate blow of soul-jazz. The voice is visiting from what feels like a long-gone world, not simply timeless but out of time. Hard to believe, but this very stunningly weathered voice, with a sense of phrasing so full of wisdom, belongs to **BABY ROSE**, who has yet to turn 30. Produced by **BADBADNOTGOOD**, 'One Last Dance' is a slow-moving, but emotionally forceful, showstopper.

Let's go for a stroll, shall we? In fact, our destination will be Canada, where Adèle Trottier-Rivard and Nicolas Basque – aka **BIBI CLUB** – are intent in watching their son playing outdoors, and pen the lovely '**Parc de Beauvoir**' as a result. Who could say no to some sweet reminiscing cradled by lulling indie-pop?

It's good to know that teenage musings still pair up nicely with spiky electric guitars and big choruses. Meet **EDIE ANDERSON**, who's presenting her debut album aged just 17: title track and lead single '**You Never Knew**' reveals a classic sound and hook-driven flair that recalls '90s alternative rock's most pleasurable flirtations with the mainstream.

Need more '90s alt-reminiscent riffs' n' hooks? Swiss rockers **ANNIE TAYLOR** have got you covered, offering something that, like some of that era's memorable anthems, is a good balance of raw and slick. On latest single '**Perfect Pretender**' they mix bursts of grungy noise with a melodic confessional that's not hard to start singing along (and wistfully head-bob) to.

After coming up with the rather brilliant nickname **BORED AT MY GRANDMAS HOUSE**, Cumbria native Amber Strawbridge gets ready to release her debut album. '**How Do You See The World**?' looks around to find disproportionate wealth and annihilating greed, and delivers heavy questions and a call for action via a mix of ruminative singer-songwriter vulnerability and shoegaze-indebted indie-pop catharsis.

Speaking of upcoming debuts worth checking out, South African five piece **THE JOY** will soon be sharing an album worth of all-vocals, no-overdubs songs recorded live in a North London studio. A strikingly unique gem, it's anticipated by '**You Complete Me**', which draws from a local tradition of vocal music known as Mbube to create something that is thoroughly engaging and hypnotic.

An inscrutable, near-metaphysical vibe also permeates **JON MCKIEL**'s '**String**'. Introduced by a tapestry of rustic, wandering guitars and bubbling cosmic synths, the song gets properly mesmeric once the Canadian musician's voice enters the scene – it's like we're witnessing a moody psych-folk séance.

Equally torn between past and present (or earth and sky) is the music made by **THE ZAWOSE QUEENS**, aka Pendo and Leah Zawose, members of one of Tanzania's most prominent musical families. On the driving 'Maisha' they blend a tradition of ancient instruments, polyrhythm and polyphony with the spacey touch of modern electronics. Irresistible indeed.

The final offering of this month's selection of tracks will prove a treat for lovers of lush instrumentals. Australian composer **FINN REES** gathers a group of talented collaborators to deliver '**Looking Up**', a sweeping, tastefully grandiose slice of cinematic jazz with old-fashioned elegance and timeless charm.

reviews 45s

THE MIDNIGHT CALLERS
The Eraser / Substitute
★★★

JEM

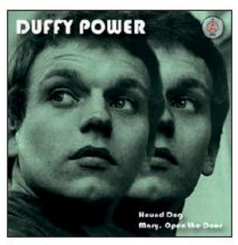
Following last year's well-regarded *Rattled Humming Heart*, on which the NYC four-piece finessed a full-throttle brew of '70s new-wave, '60s British Invasion and FM-friendly melodic rock, comes this standalone single.

'The Eraser' crashes in on a wave of glammy drums and bar-room guitars then flirts effortlessly with almost every powerpop trope in the book: we're into the second verse within 40 seconds, layered harmonies colour the brief middle eight and there's a hysterical guitar solo straight out of Todd Rundgren's favourite box. Quite why anyone would want to record a version of The Who's 'Substitute' is beyond this listener, but the lads sound like they're having fun and, in this musical environment, that seems to be paramount.

Andy Morten

DUFFY POWER
Hound Dog / Mary, Open The Door
★★★★

IN A SPIN



Spotted at a talent show by showbiz impresario Larry Parnes, Raymond Leslie Howard was quickly renamed Duffy Power in the style of other members of Parnes' stable of stars (Billy Fury, Marty Wilde, Georgie Fame) and subsequently released a slew of teenybop cover versions with limited success. It was only after breaking away from Parnes that Powers found his true calling in blues and R&B, teaming up with such luminaries as Graham Bond, Jack Bruce, Ginger Baker and John McLaughlin to record a fine cover of The Beatles' 'I Saw Her Standing There'. Yet his '60s output still only garnered critical acclaim.

His version of 'Hound Dog', originally released under the name Duffy's Nucleus in 1968, demonstrates his innate ability to channel his emotions into his work, kicking off with some soulful harp before turning the song into a personal *tour de force*. The self-penned mod-ish 'Mary, Open The Door' rolls and tumbles as Powers dynamically pours himself into the performance.

Henry Hutton

THE PRIMITIVES
I Won't Care / Everybody Needs Somebody To Hate
★★★★

HAPPY HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME

Attention fans of frothy pop in that cherished C86 tradition, The Primitives kick off their 40th (!) anniversary with a limited-edition single that's sure to fly off the shelves. Mainstays Tracy Spencer, PJ Court and Tig Williams have released two albums and numerous EPs and singles since reforming in 2009 following bassist Steve Dullaghan's passing.

Their latest contains their classic sound: Tracy's breathy vocals, Court's jangly guitar chords, and vibrant skin pounding from Williams. 'I Won't Care' still possesses their trademark sound with an edgy pop rush and a slight Stereolab groove (I'm thinking of 'Doubt'). 'Everybody Needs Somebody To Hate' seems cut from the same cloth as old favourite 'Way Behind Me' supplemented by perfect harmonies that soar over, under, sideways and round Court's vocal. Hopefully a long-player awaits in the wings.

Jeff Penczak

THE ROUTES / BOBKAT '65
The Routes / Bobkat '65 EP
★★★★

ACTION WEEKEND

One of the latest releases from Spain's happening Action Weekend label, this adventurous split EP pairs two tracks each from Japan's Routes and their own nation's Bobkat '65. Both groups have become renowned over the years for their love of mid-60s sounds, the latter a little less so, but that's mainly due to still being a somewhat under-the-radar entity for most – despite the efforts of those happy to be already in the know.

Each aggregation offers up appealingly succinct yet differing rewards from their chosen selections: the native language vocalising, compelling guitar and understated combo playing propels Bobkat '65's 'No Fuimos' ('We Didn't Go') and 'Solo Tenias Que Quedarte' ('You Only Had To Stay'), while we hear a more garage/freakbeat approach, if decidedly more restrained than usual, on The Routes' 'Train Of Thought' and 'Better Than Blue'. They've also managed to sneak in a cheeky "Colombia" logo on the labels too.

Lenny Helsing

SAMIRA
Set Me Free / Landline
★★★

SELF-RELEASED

"Written in the hills of Los Angeles and the Nevada desert, brought to life in the Rotterdam PAF Studios with producer Marcel Fakkers," the debut 45 from 22-year-old Dutch singer-guitarist Samira Serghini shows a deep appreciation of '60s LA folk-rock and showcases her rich, assured vocal and command of The Song.

What's refreshing here is the lack of slavish revivalism – this is music that's as comfortable on TikTok as it is at some Euro retro weekend. 'Set Me Free' is a break-up song (but in no way a ballad) powered by Samira's beloved Gretsch acoustic and embellished with fluid, eastern-tinged electric guitar lines courtesy of Mooon's Timo van Lierop. 'Landline' occupies the same lyrical landscape, although it's an altogether moodier proposition. Should Samira decide to embrace a fuller band sound for future releases, we'll be all ears.

Andy Morten

TRAFFIC JAM
Almost But Not Quite There / Wait A Minute
★★★

IN A SPIN

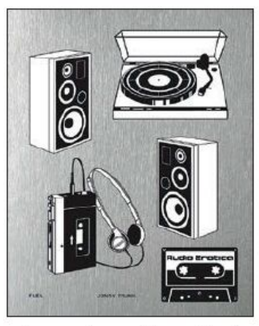
Released the same week in June 1967 as Pink Floyd's 'See Emily Play', Traffic Jam's sole 45 for Pye offshoot Piccadilly sunk without a trace, a sign of the changing times and with two sides of relatively naïve, clumsily misogynistic throwaway pop, there was no option for Traffic Jam other than to climb aboard the psych bandwagon. Fortunately, a mere six months and a name change later, the newly christened Status Quo would be smashing worldwide top 20s with the ferocious 'Pictures Of Matchstick Men'.

'Almost But Not Quite There' lends itself to the lightweight stomp of The Bee Gees' 'Spicks And Specks' (a track the Quo would adopt on their debut LP), with dubious lyrics about sexual frustrations ("I find that embarrassing now," suggests Francis Rossi in the liner notes), and keyboardist Roy Lynes' flipside 'Wait A Minute' agonisingly bemoans the impatience of certain men. A relatively rare single on the cheap.

Louis Wiggett

AUDIO EROTICA: HI-FI BROCHURES 1950S-1980S
Jonny Trunk
★★★★★

FUEL



You can always rely on the estimable Jonny Trunk in his guise of pop culture aficionado and enthusiast to come up with interesting takes on his abiding obsessions. True to form, he's done it again with this seductively eye-catching guided tour through the lost, specialist and some might say esoteric world of vintage hi-fi brochures that is *Audio Ero*tica.

Arriving as a companion volume to *Auto Erotica* and the intrepid Mr T's previous ventures into the worlds of branding design (*A-Z Of Record Shop Bags, Wrappers Delight, Own Label*), this desirable volume boasts an unsurpassed collection of images of vintage hi-fi brochures spanning the decades from their dawn in the '50s to the tech-driven boom of the '80s.

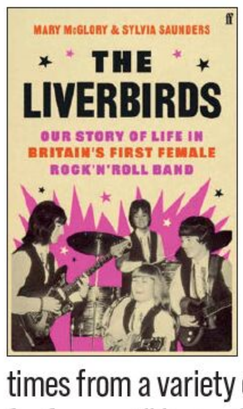
By alphabetically presenting the brochures of household name multi-nationals side by side with those of smaller, lesser-known specialist companies dealing purely in turntables or speakers, *Audio Erotica* documents and celebrates the evolution of hi-fi style while simultaneously mapping the hidden history of home audio paraphernalia and ephemera.

Guaranteed to appeal to both closet hi-fi anoraks and *connoisseurs* of vintage product and graphic design Jonny Trunk's latest labour of love elevates the lure of all things hi-fi to almost fetishist objects of desire in their own right. A must have addition to any right-thinking record collector's reference library.

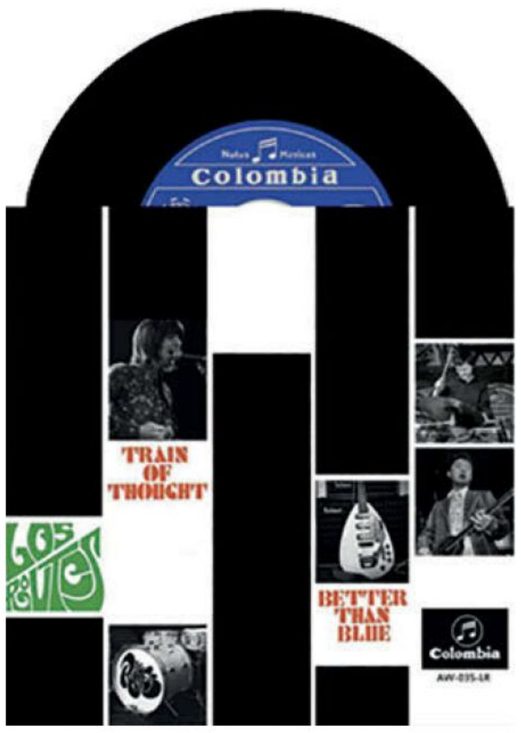
Grahame Bent

THE LIVERBIRDS: OUR LIFE IN BRITAIN'S FIRST FEMALE ROCK 'N' ROLL BAND
Mary McGlory & Sylvia Saunders
★★★★★

FABER & FABER



Four musicians who honed their craft in Liverpool's Cavern Club and the raucous bars of Hamburg's Reeperbahn. Sound familiar? While we've all heard The Beatles' origin story many times from a variety of sources and angles, far fewer will know the story of The Liverbirds, an all-female band working in what was then very much a male-dominated scene. Their tale is just as riveting. With guitarist/vocalists Pamela Birch and Valerie Gell having sadly passed in 2009 and 2016 respectively, it's left to surviving members, bassist Mary and drummer Sylvia, to tell the group's story, with expert guidance coming from music journalist Lucy O'Brien.



Beginning in a bombed-out post-war Liverpool, this is a searingly honest account of band life in the beat boom years, with grit and glamour on every page. There are fascinating encounters with Chuck Berry, The Beatles, the Stones, Brian Epstein and The Who, along with the countless bands that made '60s Hamburg such a hotbed of talent.

When The Liverbirds stop being an active group, their lives contain twists and turns that are as fascinating as their playing days had been. Romances, marriages, businesses, joys and tragedies are all documented here. Constant throughout is the shared history and friendship which forever binds the group together.

There'll be more Liverbirds happenings to come with a revised theatre play and feature film planned, but for depth and detail this book is where it's at. A must read for anyone interested in the realities of being a musician in the '60s.

Duncan Fletcher

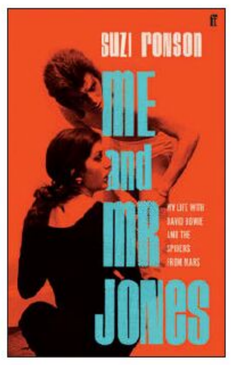
The Liverbirds shine a light on the '60s music business

ME AND MR JONES: MY LIFE WITH DAVID BOWIE AND THE SPIDERS FROM MARS

Suzi Ronson

★★★

PEGASUS PRESS



When bored Beckenham hairdresser Suzi Fussey did a set and dry for David Bowie's mother Peggy Jones one morning in 1971, she found herself swept into the debauched orbit of the Bowies' Haddon Hall salon. Befriending David, Angie and the still-hatching Spiders From Mars, Suzi perfects the Ziggy mullet, styles the Spiders and eventually finds herself employed as hair/make-up artist and dresser to Bowie. In time, as his star rises and the MainMan machine grows, she becomes confidante, gatekeeper and in her words "tour madam".

Angie is vividly drawn and sounds like an absolute hoot. Bowie himself is, unsurprisingly, a remote figure. Anybody after new dirt or insight on The Dame will be disappointed. Ronson reveals a one-night stand with her boss, but says, "whatever other confidences he shared with me will remain that: confidences". One of the few in the know about Bowie's secret plan to retire the Spiders, Suzi notes his gradual withdrawal from their first US visit onwards. During the recording of *Pin-Ups*, she finally hooks up with lingering crush Mick Ronson, who becomes a much more significant presence.

The book ends with their '77 marriage, and Ronno's struggle to find a place for himself solo, with Mott and on Dylan's Rolling Thunder revue. Suzi never sees Bowie again after the taping of *The 1980 Floor Show*, and clearly misses him. Ending on the poignant coda of Bowie's death, it's an interesting read, but you come away wanting to hear more about life with Ronno.

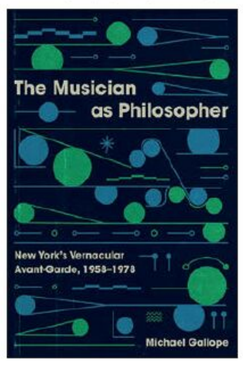
Martin Ruddock

THE MUSICIAN AS PHILOSOPHER: NEW YORK'S VERNACULAR AVANT-GARDE 1958-1978

Michael Gallope

★★★★

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS



Writing about The Velvet Underground, Patti Smith, Richard Hell, Alice Coltrane, Ornette Coleman and pianist-composer David Tudor over a 20-year period, Gallope doesn't so much make a case for them as deliberate, consistent philosophers as examine their work and formative influences through the rigorous lens of modernist philosophy. He places them in a broader context of 20th century *avant-garde* art and tries to unpick the meaning of the sounds they made as much, or more, than what they said in lyrics, statements and interviews.

It's very much an academic text, and the first 50 pages, laying out the theoretical basis of the book, are hard going for the casual reader. Thereafter, things become somewhat more accessible, though Gallope is still prone to telling us, for instance, that the VU were "harnessing ineffability by occluding the communicative transparency of intentionality" at their early live shows.

Taken on its own terms, however, *The Musician As Philosopher* contains much that's rewarding and insightful. Gallope is particularly good on the unacknowledged debts to Black music and culture owed by the Velvets and Smith, while not sparing Coleman or Coltrane for their occasional lapses into unconsidered orientalism. He also summarises how the New Age thought that underpinned the counterculture of the era incorporated racist and even proto-fascist ideas alongside progressive notions. But for all his criticisms, Gallope celebrates these musicians and their innovations. It's not a light read, but anyone seriously interested in the artists concerned will find much to get their teeth into here.

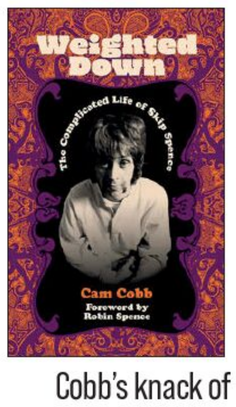
Ben Graham

WEIGHTED DOWN: THE COMPLICATED LIFE OF SKIP SPENCE

Cam Cobb

★★★★★

OMNIBUS PRESS



The tale of Alexander 'Skip' Spence, one of three guitarists with San Francisco's hottest property Moby Grape, drummer for Jefferson Airplane Mark I, son, brother, father, friend and human sparkplug.

Cobb's knack of blending undisputed fact with poetic imagery shines through in this woebegone tale, balancing amphetamine-paced action with the undeniable adoration "everyone" had for the subject. Those who read our issue #149 cover story will know of the obvious "turning point" and this sensitive issue is handled well, the rapid rise to nascent stardom, a dormant mental health condition, and the burgeoning drug culture all playing a part in Skip's fall from grace.

The shift of energies during the recording of the Grape's second album *Wow/Grape Jam* that intersected Skip's initial breakdown is palpable, and the band's outpouring of love and concern for their struggling comrade is noteworthy. Yet news to this reader is the Colditz-copy Grape (formed by spurned manager Matthew Katz) that played a succession of shows across the Northwest and is played out here as tragicomedy.

From incarceration at Bellevue, the recording of masterwork *Oar*, to a succession of failed Grape reunions; whilst transpiring in a relatively short timeframe it seems little was done in that critical period to help Skip with his demons (the Grape's label Columbia showed no expertise in managing the health needs of major signings). It was then just a short stroll to a life lived between halfway houses, clinics and the street. A "lump in the throat" addition to any San Fran shelf.

Louis Wiggett

LISTEN TO THE
SHINDIG!
BROADCAST
ON MIXCLOUD

The Stairs' Paul McGuire, Ged Lynn and Edgar 'Summertyme' Jones tear it up with The Beatpack (opposite, top)
PHOTO: DAVID BARBENEL

THE STAIRS / THE BEATPACK
02 Academy, London
FRIDAY 22ND MARCH

Deerstalker-sporting Beatpacker Hugh blows hot blasts of harp through the mic to "clear the pipes", greets the crowd, then straight into two-step gospel-vamp 'Put a Little Sugar On It', his vocals still as youthful-sounding as any 20-year old, matching the rest of the band's garage-with-gusto from the get-go approach with great aplomb, then 'Black Sea Tobacco Pose', saturated-fuzz guitar slicing up prime slabs of 1966 freakbeat tension *à la* Wimple Winch, with its super hooky refrain, "I can't help the way I feel" hammered home via a '65 Kinks-ish middle eight.

The Beatpack are totally tuff tonight; Nicky Hopkins-style piano, Yardbirds rave-ups, 'Smokestack Lightning' riffery on 'Tumbles Like A Domino', the irresistible minor-key gallop of new LP track 'Wednesday's Calling' and the descending mod-chords of 'People In The City'; all this and a Standells cover too, fantastic.

Walking onstage to a packed cheering crowd, it's abundantly clear that age cannot wither The Stairs. Looking almost identical to their early '90s selves (Edgar Jones' specs excepted) everything else remains the same – these guys have *chops*, and always have, even way back as Liverpool scene-teens. Edgar's impressively physical fingerstyle bass-playing, his voice a Dave Aguilar / Don Gardner mash-up, Ged Lynn's snaking *Revolver*-era Beatle George/Dave Davies chord shapes with germanium-fuzz excursions, and Paul Maguire's Robert Wyatt/Softs first LP drum fills and rolls combine into one joyful stomping roar on such paeans to the sweet shared smoke as 'Mary Joanna', 'Skin Up' and 'Weed Bus', exhilarating horseback ride across The Great Steppe 'The Russian Spy And I', and Ged's brilliantly skewed 'Shit Town' and 'Mr Joke Shop Owner'.

Keyboardist Ollie, from fellow Liverpudlian band Casino is brought on, adding Brian Auger flavours from halfway through to the closer, an exquisite cover of 'Suzy Creamcheese' via two new songs and a "compendium" of several more Stairs classics, interpolating 'Don't Need Your Loving' and 'Gloria', featuring a hot solo from Paul, causing shouts from the crowd of "Still got it, Ia'". Indeed, the whole band does, as amply proved by tonight's mind-blowing performance.

Stephen Wood

"Looking almost identical to their early '90s selves (Edgar Jones' specs excepted) everything else remains the same – these guys have *chops*, and always have, even way back as Liverpool scene-teens"

SXSW SEND OFF
The Hideout, Chicago
SATURDAY 9TH MARCH

For 15 years The Hideout have been throwing SXSW send-off parties, with every dollar spent on the door, raffle tickets or one of the western shirts on a rail outside, going towards the local artists making the near 19-hour drive to Austin. A truly altruistic affair showing The Hideout's importance in the Chicago music scene. A friendly, family atmosphere permeates the air. Impossible to review six bands in such a small space so here are the highlights.

Reilly Downes appears with her band The Acid Cowboys and performs a mesmerising set, living up to the soubriquet "The Sad Songbird Of Chicago" with delicate songs full of heartbreak, a cover of Chris Isaak's 'Wicked Game' is breath-taking as is a version of Lucinda Williams' 'Something About What Happens When We Talk'. The band is punchy and rocks out when needed, giving Reilly the chance to really push her Texas Hill voice, showing that there's far more to her than ballads. As her t-shirt says she's a "Cuntry Queen".

Doing a complete 180-degree turn, Cabeza Del Chivo (Head Of The Goat) are like a grubbier, hairier Los Bitchos. Their Dubby Soca Space Surf is a freewheeling psychedelic journey into Latin sounds. Utterly beguiling, utterly bonkers and utterly brilliant. Danza De Chivo is an energetic burst of multi frequency freak-out, the multiple drops and changes are handled impeccably by the band. If you get the chance you HAVE to see these guys.

A great event with a great ethos.

Ben Adlam

LARGE PLANTS
The Prince Albert, Brighton
SUNDAY 10TH MARCH

For a band whose first release was a novelty (though great) Madonna cover for April Fool's Day, there's something unavoidably melancholy about Large Plants. Last year's sophomore album *The Thorn* unveiled this deeper side to the public gaze, and on the final date (for now) of the somewhat staggered tour to promote said LP, an air of beautiful sadness cuts through the joyful rock riffing and light-hearted stage banter. Sure, the guitar interplay between bandleader Jack Sharp and masterful foil Joe Woolley is intense and powerful, while bassist Paul Milne (also of The Hanging Stars and Green Seagull) and stand-in drummer Anthony Paine underpin the songs with muscular, driving rhythms. But it's Jack's voice that breaks your heart, despite being relatively low in the mix. His singing comes from the folk tradition where emotion is underplayed rather than acted out, but there's no denying it: this boy has soul.

During a set divided equally between songs from their two albums, Large Plants open with the title track from *The Carrier* and end with that of *The Thorn*. Each number seems to grow organically into the next, and if to the casual ear they all sound like the same song then it's only in the sense that Neil Young is rightly celebrated for continually hewing the same musical furrow. Trebly lead licks knot together over shifting time signatures, and minor seventh chords subvert classic songwriting structures. 'La Isla Bonita' was pencilled in as an encore, but curfew hit instead; tonight, honestly, nobody missed it.

Ben Graham

Reilly Downes & The Acid Cowboys
PHOTO: BEN ADLAM

Black Doldrums. Pitch-dark and sharp
PHOTO: JEFF PITCHER.TIF

LAETITIA SADIER
The Garrison, Toronto
FRIDAY 15TH MARCH

A cold snap has hit Toronto, but the rare chance of seeing Stereolab's front woman in a small venue has gotten a full crowd to fight their return-to-hibernation instincts.

Opening with 'Dry Fruit', a 2015 cassette single, Sadier kicks off a set that's drawn fully from the body of work she's created outside of Stereolab. Between three albums under the Monade moniker and five under her own name, she's got a lot to choose from and opts to largely showcase her new album *Rooting For Love*.

From the get-go, her effortless cool is apparent – she's got the crowd mesmerised by her powerful yet calm and humble presence. It's a one-woman show and she holds the attention of all throughout, switching deftly from guitar to synth, later pulling out a trombone. Her voice is in top form, as clear and tranquilising as ever. Sometimes there are backing tracks, sometimes there are loops, sometimes there aren't. When she breaks into interpretive dance and pulls it off, Laurie Anderson becomes the closest comparison for the mixture of artfulness on display. When she speaks, she's at ease, and what she's got to say is always purposeful – whether that's explaining the meaning of a song or delivering messages on people power, war and feminism.

By the end, the thoroughly pleased crowd are either heading back into the cold buzzing, or making their way side-stage where Sadier has re-emerged to take the time to attentively speak to all who want a moment with her.

Greg Jarvis

BLACK DOLDRUMS / THE HEADSHRINKERS
The Piper, St Leonards
SATURDAY 23RD MARCH

Hastings' masked heroes The Headshrinkers are putting in the time supporting every band that swings by the seaside town, but their zipped-up Stooges riffs and gruff Fall barking are deserving of wider appreciation. 'Motorbike''s tale of riding a cycle 'In the middle of the night' roars along full-throttle, while 'Derivative''s bouncy surf-twang is a delicious stand-out.

With cheekbones sharp enough to slice cheese on, fringes hacked short and in full pitch-dark regalia, Black Doldrums were always odd-on to sound like Ian Curtis' corvid cousins. But although 'In Silence' is an obvious nod to Joy Division, and 'Into Blue' a slow, gorgeous soar into New Order territory, this London band have much more up their wizard's sleeves.

The original core of singer and guitarist Kevin Gibbard and drummer Sophia Lacroix have now been augmented by Matt Holt on bass, and together create a swirling miasma of high goth, post-punk and shoegaze. It's a heady and rich mix with reverberations of Spacemen 3, the Sisters and Slowdive. Sophia's elemental drumming is the foundation of the band; she conjures up spirits while keeping a sickeningly perfectly straight fringe. In flagrant violation of accepted shoegaze etiquette, Kevin wanders into the crowd, still playing, and twists and contorts on the stage like a rock 'n' roll pretzel, while there's more than a trace of Brett Anderson in his vocals and stance. There's more tension and drama on stage than during finals week at RADA, albeit with a heavily knowing wink. Fresh song 'New Moon' portends well for the next album, while the Spacemen boogie of 'Dying For You' is perhaps the highlight of this archly accomplished set.

Kate Hodges

SUNN O)))
SWG3, Glasgow
TUESDAY 26TH MARCH

A visual reminder of the sonic extremities Seattle experimental duo SUNN O))) is infamous for summoning, is the towering wall of amps and speaker cabinets stretching from one side of the stage to the other. Probably best known for Soused their 2014 left field collaboration with Scott Walker, no such concessions to even tangential notions of accessibility are on the cards tonight as this is SUNN O))) undiluted, up close and crushingly loud.

In the countdown to showtime the stage becomes progressively more shrouded in a dense curtain of smoke as the sound of Gregorian chants hint at impending religious experience. And then it begins – wave after wave of otherworldly down-tuned guitar-generated drones, which coalesce into a continually reverberating wall of sound that provides the all-enveloping soundtrack for the next 90 minutes. No lyrics and no discernible rhythms – just layer upon layer of spacily ambient, trance-inducing feedback, distortion, dissonance and complete audio overload.

It's only much later that the robed and hooded silhouettes of guitarists Stephen O'Malley and Greg Anderson gradually emerge through the haze to bring their almost ritualistic performance to a climax before taking the acclaim of the crowd like hallowed prophets from the dark side.

Grahame Bent

HOTLINE TNT
The Echo, Los Angeles
THURSDAY 28TH MARCH

After a raucous opener that left some of us wondering, "Am I too old to be here?" Hotline TNT take the stage and show us we're right where we belong: in a crowd of folks who are equally ambivalent about performing their enthusiasm.

They start the evening with 'Protocol,' the first song from 2023 album *Cartwheel*, and a perfect opener that builds and builds, until lackadaisical vocals chime in to forestall the possibility of riotous relief. Frontman/vocalist Will Anderson injects the brilliant synchronicity of the band with some early 2000s Midwestern bathos. Meanwhile, the crowd's periphery ages dramatically as the youngsters are not-so-subtly summoned forth to mosh. Anderson actually keeps insisting it's what we do: "I'm not playing one more note until you guys go harder," we're told. We telepathise our resistance. In a fit of punk zealotry, a band member tosses his hat out to the crowd. Someone, meekly, flings it back. The band persists, playing their best tracks like 'Out Of Town' and 'I Thought You'd Change.'

Is it fair to judge a band on their crowd-surfers? When you've got boy after boy jumping into nothingness, a brief bob from the legs, and then subsuming, it seems something's amiss. Anderson is an undeniably talented songwriter and bandleader, but his voice, like his crowd-surfers, is flailing. A few literal and non-literal soundchecks went awry tonight, and now we're all legs up.

Tess Carges

Prize Crossword

by Stuart Draper

Originally issued in 1998 as part of Decca's "Scene" series, ***THE NORTHERN SOUL SCENE*** – featuring hits and deep cuts from the likes of UK players The Flirtations, Billie Davis, Dave Berry and David Essex – has been buffed up for this juicy new orange 2-LP edition.
And we have a copy to give away.
To enter, simply send your completed crossword to *Shindig!* #151 Crossword, 40 Windsor Crescent, Frome, Somerset BA11 2EA or email a legible scan of it to win@shindig-magazine.com with the words "S! #151 crossword competition" in the subject line, no later than 6th June. And don't forget to include your name and address!

Across

1 Identifying as a specific Chess / Cadet comp, The New Rotary Connection blackmailed Goth badly ahead of the sun (1,2,3,9)
7 Questionably no finer outing from Electric Moon (7)
9 Chad & Jeremy's painted smile holds 24 hours of radiance (7)
11 Finance bouncer as The Doors take on Willie Dixon (4,4,3)
13/14 Donovan's short-lived band combine non-stop enjoyment with electro advancement – partially in both cases (4,4)
15 External removes unknown after emotional third for Melody's Echo Chamber (7)
18 The Ides of March begin to provide inner sounds (on the side, with nose out of joint) (3,2)
19 Midas in reverse – once divided – accompanies The Yardbirds' still (2,3)
20 Dave Edmunds initially paired with advertising bloke for Josefus debut (4,3)
23 Some complexity adds 9 for The Chesterfield Kings or The Heard (4)
25 Commander George Frayne takes the edges of comedy (4)
26 Newman starts to depart lunch deviously, suddenly (11)
27 Mike sent him batty as our #124 cover star (7)
29 Pre-Damned Brian James band sat awry in Shakespeare (7)
31 You're animatedly agitated with The Galileo 7's latest (3,2,3,7)

Down

1 If not me, in theory sophomore from Supergrass requires remix (2,2,3,3,5)
2 Tell no lies astride other ends with The Zombies (3)
3 Northern capital joins boiled boiled on the front of our issue 128 (7)
4 Jimmy Webb's demand soon shed democratic opening for 1971 album etc (3,2,2)
5 Steppenwolf's John is mostly okay (3)
6 Down to earth as rotten leaves, Dodd's men double up behind for a 1964 smash (2,3,5,5)
8 Head Sheepdog curries favour with new anew (4)
10 Wild rage ends top John Peel-fronted show (4)
11 King Drifter good enough for Jethro Tull's third (7)
12 Spot on with no starter remade by The Box Tops (3-4)
15 High Flying Bird composer Billy Wheeler makes mid meddle as middle (3)
16 Noise needs semi-shared start for French underground group (3)
17 Tam adds slight decline to complete folk-horror with Pentangle theme (3)
21 Along comes The Association to finally finish off The Beatles (3,4)
22 The Undertones marshal barbarism's beginnings for confectionery ode (4,3)
24 Gloria band with Emily after operation (4)
25 Trumpton narrator leads first Seeds song (4)
28 Likewise when Lewis left, Izear Turner remained (3)
30 Glass halts, dies from disease for Susan James (3)

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Phone _____ **Email** _____

Issue 150 crossword solution

	1 A	2 D	R	E	3 A	M	4 I	S	5 A	L	L	6 W	E	
7 A		Y			L		V		B			Y		8 A
9 B	R	I	N	10 S	L	11 E	Y	12 S	C	13 H	W	A	R	Z
L		N		H		14 A	S	H		A		T		T
15 A	R	G	16 U	E		R		O		17 T	18 I	T	L	E
C			19 H	A	20 L	L	21 O	W	22 E	E	N			C
23 K	A	T	H		I		L		V		24 S	H	E	S
			U		25 L	A	I	N	E		T			
26 O	U	C	H		A		V		N		27 E	P	I	28 C
R			29 O	30 R	C	31 H	E	32 S	T	33 R	A			A
34 M	A	35 C	H	O		E		V		36 O	D	37 E	O	N
S		Y		K		38 A	39 W	E		O		Y		A
40 B	A	R	R	Y	41 D	R	A	N	42 S	F	I	E	L	D
Y		I			A		V		U			O		A
	43 B	L	O	O	D	C	E	R	E	M	O	N	Y	

HUGH CORNWELL

ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR TOUR

NOVEMBER 2024

20 READING SUB 89
21 LEEDS OLD WOOLLEN
22 EDINBURGH QUEENS HALL
23 SUNDERLAND FIRE STATION
27 SOUTHAMPTON THE BROOK
28 LONDON ELECTRIC BALLROOM
29 MANCHESTER ACADEMY
30 NORTHAMPTON ROADMENDER

MOJO 4/4 STARS - "CORNWELL'S STILL DOING THINGS HIS WAY AND OFTEN WITH STRIKING RESULTS"

WISHBONE ASH

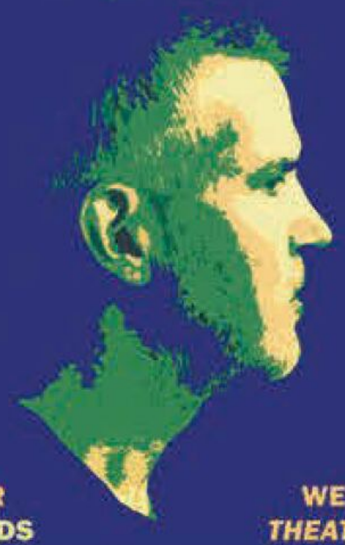
TWIN GUITARS - CLASSIC ROCK

FEATURING SONGS FROM LIVE DATES II

21:09 CHESTER LIVE ROOMS
23:09 LYTHAM LOWTHER PAVILION
24:09 SOUTHPORT ATKINSON
26:09 CARLISLE OLD FIRE STATION
27:09 GLASGOW ORAN MOR
03:10 LEEDS BRUDENELL
04:10 HOLMFIRTH PICTUREDROME
05:10 BURY MET THEATRE
07:10 BURY ST EDMUNDS THE APEX
09:10 LINCOLN DRILL
10:10 WALSALL ARENA
11:10 RUGBY BENN HALL
21:10 CARDIFF TRAMSHED
22:10 GLOUCESTER GUILDHALL
23:10 NEWBURY ARLINGTON ARTS
24:10 ISLINGTON ASSEMBLY HALL

ASHCON 2024 WISHBONE ASH CONVENTION
CHESTER LIVE ROOMS - SATURDAY 21 SEP (MIDDAY)
TICKETS PURCHASED FOR ASHCON INCLUDE ENTRY TO EVENING SHOW

LLOYD COLE



SATURDAY 14 SEPTEMBER
***THE APEX* - BURY ST EDMUNDS**

WEDNESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER
***THEATRE SEVERN* - SHREWSBURY**

THURSDAY 19 SEPTEMBER
***LOWTHER PAVILION* - LYTHAM**

The Humblebums

The New Humblebums

TRANSATLANTIC, UK, 1969

COVER PAINTING BY PATRICK (JOHN BYRNE)

The magical first sleeve from a man destined to become one of Scotland's finest painters. **CHRIS GROOM** looks out for lions and lacrosse sticks...

How rare, and wonderful, for a young musician to write a song about the artist who has painted their album cover. Yet there it is, Side One, Track Three: Gerry Rafferty's 'Patrick' – a lyrical appreciation of the dapper, humorous, eccentric painter and their close, ongoing friendship.

The man in question is, of course, John 'Patrick' Byrne, who the art world sadly lost in November 2023. A true polymath – artist, playwright, set designer, scriptwriter – Byrne has rightly featured in these pages before, but this seems a perfect time to revere his talents anew.

The 1969 painting for *The New Humblebums* was his first printed sleeve (his earlier commission for The Fab Four would not be used until *The Beatles Ballads* many years later) and opened the floodgates to a working collaboration with Gerry Rafferty that would endure throughout the songwriter's career. Kudos must also go to Transatlantic Records and their visionary founder Nat Joseph, not just for signing the odd couple that was Rafferty and Billy Connolly, but for trusting a relatively unknown artist with the sleeve.

Rafferty had known "Patrick, my primitive painter of art" since their early Paisley days, Byrne growing up about a mile from Underwood Lane, where the Rafferty family lived. He was a schoolfriend of Gerry's older brother Jim, and subsequently worked beside him in the slab room at Stoddard's carpet factory, later writing the acclaimed play *The Slab Boys* based on their experiences. Young Gerry would regularly hang out at Byrne's bohemian bungalow whilst courting his future wife Carla Ventilla, before accompanying Byrne and his wife Alice to their favourite Italian restaurant.

The Humblebums emerged in '65, when the banjo-playing Glaswegian Billy Connolly joined forces with bluegrass guitarist Tam Harvey to take on the pubs and folk clubs of Glasgow. They recorded one album for Transatlantic in early '69 before being joined by songwriter Gerry Rafferty, yet while Connolly loved the new influx of songs, his initial impression was that Rafferty was "dreadfully strange – the kind of guy you'd expect to see hanging about in the darkest corner of a library". Harvey left not long after and the remaining pair released *The New Humblebums* later that same year.

Rafferty naturally recommended his friend to supply the cover artwork and Byrne's painting is typical of the childlike, naive style he had adopted at that period, the vivid colours, tumbling ribbons and strange animals, plus the delightful caricatures of the two musicians, dressed in sailor suits as if posing for a Victorian family photograph. Connolly keeps his banjo, while Rafferty gets a lacrosse stick for a guitar.

The Humblebums were destined to have a brief lifespan. A natural comedian, Connolly's mid-song monologues were getting longer while Rafferty craved song time. Nat Joseph spotted the problem and after one further album – '70's folk-rock offering *Open Up The* Door – suggested a change of direction. Managing to keep both on the label for their solo debuts, Joseph also got Byrne to produce cover paintings for Connolly's '72 *Live* and Rafferty's '71 solo debut *Can I Have My Money Back?* That title is a direct dig at Transatlantic, who insisted Rafferty honour his contract with one final album, despite his desire to put together the group that would become Stealers Wheel.

John Byrne knew full well that the music business was a great way to put his art in front of a wider audience. Talking to *MAP* magazine in 2005, he said, "I love designing sleeves. You know if the record's successful it's going to be in hundreds of thousands of homes. It's a lovely way to disseminate your work."

"You know if the record's successful it's going to be in hundreds of thousands of homes. It's a lovely way to disseminate your work"

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09 **LEEDS** THE OLD WOOLLEN
15 **PAISLEY** THE BUNGALOW
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OCT 2
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OCT 3
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OCT 6
BRISTOL O_2 ACADEMY

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SAT 05 OCT BIRMINGHAM O_2 ACADEMY2
FRI 11 OCT LEICESTER O_2 ACADEMY2
FRI 18 OCT SHEFFIELD O_2 ACADEMY2
2025
FRI 17 JAN NEWCASTLE O_2 CITY HALL

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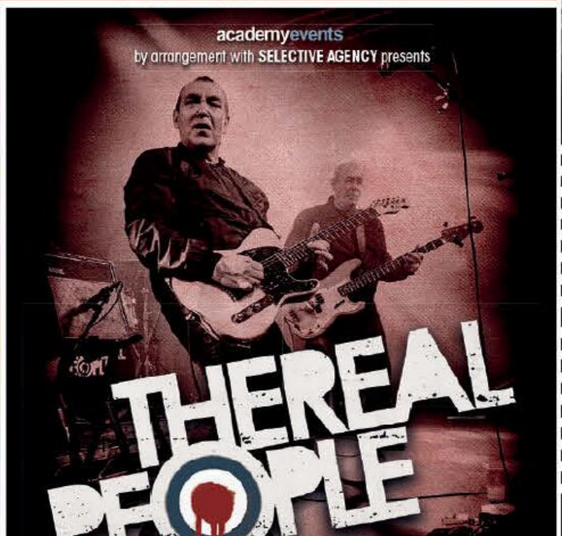
THE REAL PEOPLE



2024
SAT 28 SEP **LIVERPOOL** O_2 ACADEMY
SAT 12 OCT **BIRMINGHAM** O_2 ACADEMY3
FRI 08 NOV **LONDON** O_2 ACADEMY2 ISLINGTON

BLACK ANGELS

TICKETMASTER.CO.UK

vinyl clicks

In which **MICHAEL BJÖRN** investigates worthy albums that have somehow eluded reissue, compilation or acclaim

BLUE MINK

Fruity

(EMI, UK, 1974)

Featuring the distinctive vocal interplay of Roger Cook and Madeline Bell, soul-pop combo Blue Mink had scored Top 20 hits every year since 1969. But the hits dried up, and in '74 the writing was on the wall. "I was tired of the road, and made up my mind to move to the United States," says Roger. "We knew that this was probably our last album."

An album cover potentially condescendingly featuring a black person has also made reissues somewhat problematic. "Being the only person of colour in the band, I found it shit," says Madeline. "The back cover photo was shot as I was recovering from an appendectomy. I neither looked, nor felt well." Roger sees it completely differently. "Madeline's forebears going way back were African. I like it a lot." But he makes up for any unintended insensitivity with a heartfelt ode to his singing partner, a stand-out track that alone is worth the price of admission. "If I was going to write a Song For Madeline, it was going to be a true sentiment," explains Roger. "I love the girl." His deeply appreciative lyric also impressed Madeline. "I became tearful when I heard the final mix," says Madeline. "It didn't get better than that day."

They are however less in agreement about other tracks. "The effort didn't quite go into it that went into the other albums," sighs Roger. But Madeline has just one word for the album: "Quality." She adds, "'Mouth' is a cute track." Roger's view differs. "That's Herbie playing bass and singing with a strange lyric," he says. "A little bit of weed in that one, I'm afraid." He is also similarly dismissive of the album's only and admittedly strange single cut 'Quackers'. "My unfavourite track," he calls it. "We were probably very high at the time."

Recorded at the recently upgraded Morgan Studios, the sound is a joy to the ears. "We didn't know how we'd fill 16 tracks," muses Roger. "In the end, we used them to get better clarity on all the instruments." A nine-to-five routine also helped keep things in focus. "It was like we were doing sessions," explains Roger. "I like the discipline of turning up right on the money." As a result, *Fruity* is perhaps more about the playing than the songwriting. "Those guys were awesome players. Barry Morgan as a drummer, Alan Parker, and of course, Herbie and Ann Odell – all great musicians." But the record company was disappointed. "They wanted a big hit single, and they didn't get that," says Roger. "You could just smell the end of the band."

Rather than sulk, they relax, stretch out, and serve up a warm, funky delight that may just have aged better than the rest of the Blue Mink catalogue.

Blue Mink circa 1973, with Roger Cook and Madelline Bell (second and third left)

audio heaven

MURDO MATHEWSON surveys the latest improvements in hi-fi, audio, and gadgetry

GROOVE IS IN THE HEART

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Roon is an advanced subscription software for your digital music streams and files. It supports high-res audio and offers an immensely satisfying way to navigate your collection. So, if Roon is your music librarian, Roon Nucleus One is the library building. Designed specifically to run Roon, Nucleus One takes the place of, say, your Mac or PC. Like the best libraries, Nucleus One is quiet (note the internal fan design and concealed dual vents), offers flexible storage options (up to 8TB), and delivers handsome external aesthetics. Shhh!

2 FOR T

Pro-Ject T2

£479.00

henleyaudio.co.uk

Pro-Ject strips back its £899.00 T2 W design, lopping almost 50% off the OG's price to create the T2. Unlike the T2 W, the new model doesn't offer wireless streaming or integrate a phono stage. It does, though, feature a heavy glass platter, sturdy wood plinth, new aluminium tonearm and a Sumiko Rainier moving magnet (MM) cartridge. If you need a phono stage, the £599.00 T2 Super Phono integrates an MM design.

KING TUBEY

Orange Valve Tester MK II

£850.00

orangeamps.com

It's a pricey investment, but the Orange Valve Tester MK II is a potentially invaluable tool for guitarists, guitar techs, repairers, *and* hi-fi system valve amp owners. Designed and built in the UK, the Valve Tester Mk II tests valves – or *toobs*, for those across the pond – at the press of a button. The unit extensively examines a valve in around two minutes, providing a "health" rating and a numerical grade to help you perfectly match it with a fellow tube.

RUNNING UP THAT HILL

Sennheiser MOMENTUM Sport

£260.00

Sennheiser's new wireless in-ears integrate built-in heart rate and body temperature sensors that can share data with apps and devices, including Apple Health, Garmin Connect, Peloton and Strava. The German maker invariably delivers great-sounding earwear, so these feature-loaded buds are a solid choice for active sorts who value an energetic sound.

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